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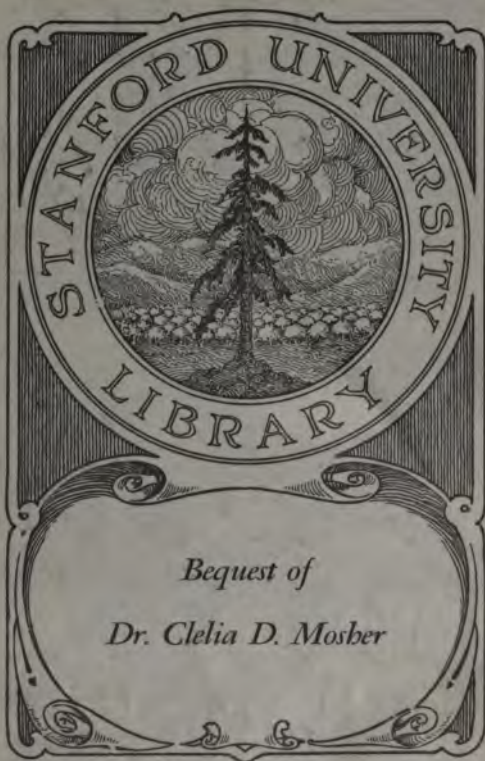
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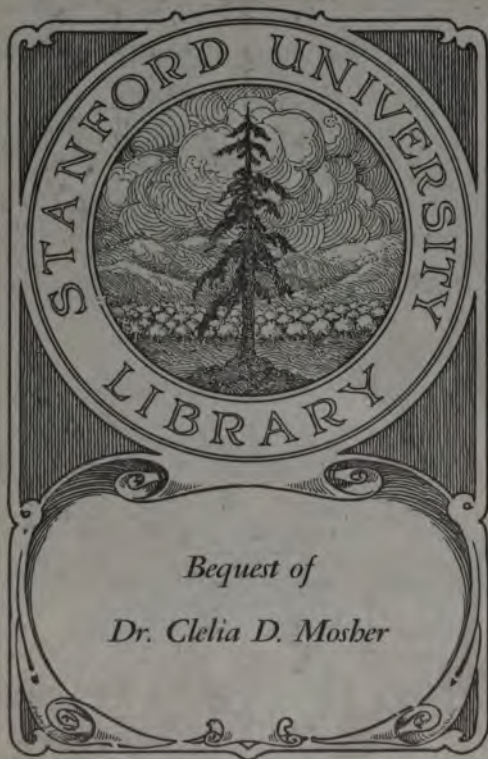


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DRAMATIC WORKS.

DRAMATIC WORKS

BY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL I.

THE DUCHESS DE LA VALLIERE.
THE LADY OF LYONS.

| RICHELIEU.
NOT SO BAD AS WE SEEM.

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THE BROADWAY, LUDGATE

NEW YORK : 416 BROOME STREET

1876

A

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PREFATORY NOTE TO THE KNEBWORTH EDITION.

THE four Dramatic Works included in the present volume were produced by Lord Lytton within an interval of fifteen years. Two of these have, ever since their first performance, held their ground among the stock pieces on the English stage. The earliest of all his plays—Mr. Bulwer's maiden play of "The Duchess de la Vallière"—was the only one which failed at once to secure popular approbation as an acting drama. Brought out at Covent Garden Theatre upon Wednesday, the 4th January, 1837, with a rather indifferent cast (save only that Macready was the Marquess de Bragelone), it was withdrawn after nine representations. Published immediately afterwards by the Messrs. Saunders and Otley, it has since then retained its repute simply as a work of art in the closet.

"The Lady of Lyons," which was dashed off a twelve-month afterwards, literally upon the spur of the moment, achieved, upon the other hand, a brilliant success. Macready having, a year prior to this, undertaken the management of Covent Garden Theatre, while talking over the responsibilities of the enterprise, had one day exclaimed to the Author, "Oh! that I could get a play like the 'Honeymoon!'" Within a fortnight from the utterance of that ejaculation, the manuscript of the "Lady of Lyons" was placed as a gift in the hands of the Manager. Brought out anonymously, on Thursday, the 15th February, 1838, its reception was triumphant, and at the close of another fortnight the authorship was acknowledged upon the play bills.

A similar welcome, on Thursday, the 7th March, 1839, was accorded to the historical drama of "Richelieu," Macready making his mark as the Cardinal as unmistakeably as he had previously done in the rôle of Claude Melnotte. During that same year, Lord Lytton, upon Thursday, the

31st October, placed upon the boards of the Haymarket his play of "The Sea Captain," which, in spite of its having a brilliant run during that season, was subsequently, in obedience to the author's desire, withdrawn, not merely from the stage, but from publication. The root idea of that drama was several years afterwards re-adapted by Lord Lytton, under the title of "The Rightful Heir."

The last drama in this volume, "Not so Bad as we Seem," was distinctly a *piece de circonstance*. It was written—like "The Lady of Lyons,"—in obedience to a sudden impulse and with singular rapidity. It originated one winter's evening in the banqueting hall at Knebworth, after some amateur theatricals, the actors in which were a cluster of artists and men of letters, pre-eminent among whom was Charles Dickens. Lord Lytton and his guests upon that occasion projected together the establishment of a benevolent institution for the help of their less fortunate brothers of the pen and pencil, to be called "The Guild of Art and Literature." In furtherance of this project the host had said, "Undertake to act a play yourselves and I engage to write it." Hence the production of this five-act drama, the original cast of which, as having now a peculiar interest of its own, is here prefixed to it as a literary curiosity. The play, which rapidly poured three thousand pounds into the coffers of the newly created Guild, was first performed on Friday, the 16th May, 1851, in the presence of Her Majesty and the Prince Consort, in a temporary theatre erected in the late Duke of Devonshire's town house in Piccadilly.

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THE
DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH.

THE DUKE DE LAUZUN,

COUNT DE GRAMMONT,

MARQUIS DE MONTESPAN,

} *Courtiers.*

THE MARQUIS DE BRAGELONE, *betrothed to Mademoiselle de la Vallière.*

BERTRAND, *the Armourer.*

Courtiers, Gentlemen of the Chamber, Priests, &c.

MADAME DE LA VALLIÈRE.

MADMOISELLE (afterwards Duchess) DE LA VALLIÈRE.

MADAME DE MONTESPAN.

ABBESS.

Nuns, Ladies, Maids of Honour, &c.

PROLOGUE.

To paint the Past, yet in the Past portray
Such shapes as seem dim prophets of To-day ;—
To trace, through all the garish streams of art,
Nature's deep fountain—woman's silent art ;—
On the stirr'd surface of the soften'd mind
To leave the print of holier truths behind ;—
And, while through joy or grief—through calm or strife,
Bound the wild Passions on the course of Life,
To share the race—yet point the proper goal,
And make the Affections preachers to the Soul ;—
Such is the aim with which a gaudier age
Now woos the brief revival of the stage ;—
Such is the moral, though unseen it flows,
In Lauzun's wiles and soft La Vallière's woes ;
Such the design our Author boldly drew,
And, losing boldness, now submits to YOU.

Not new to climes where dreamy FABLE dwells—
That magic Prospero of the Isle of Spells—
Now first the wanderer treads, with anxious fear,
The fairy land whose flowers allured him here.
Dread is the court our alien pleads before ;
Your verdict makes his exile from the shore.
Yet, e'en if banish'd, let him think, in pride,
He trod the path with no unhallow'd guide ;
Chasing the light, whose face, though veil'd and dim,
Perchance a meteor, seem'd a star to him,
Hoping the ray might rest where TRUTH appears
Beneath her native well—your smiles and tears.

When a wide waste, to LAW itself unknown,
Lay that fair world the DRAMA calls its own ;
When all might riot on the mines of Thought,
And Genius starved amidst the wealth it wrought ;
He who now ventures on the haunted soil
For nobler labourers won the rights of toil,
And his the boast—that Fame now rests in ease.
Beneath the shade of her own laurel-trees.
Yes, if with all the critic on their brow,
His clients once have grown his judges now,
And watch, like spirits on the Elysian side,
Their brother ferried o'er the Stygian tide,
To where, on souls untried, austere sit
(The triple Minos)—Gallery—Boxes—Pit—
'Twill soothe to think, howe'er the verdict end,
In every rival he hath served a friend.

PROLOGUE.

But well we know, and, knowing, we rejoice,
The mightiest Critic is the PUBLIC VOICE.
Awed, yet resign'd, our novice trusts in you,
Hard to the practised, gentle to the new.
Whate'er the anxious strife of hope and fear,
He asks no favour—let the stage be clear.
If from the life his shapes the poet draws,
In man's deep breast lie all the critic's laws :
If not, in vain the nicely-poised design,
Vain the cold music of the labour'd line,
Before our eyes, behold the living rules ;—
The soul has instincts wiser than the schools !
Yours is the Great Tribunal of the Heart,
And touch'd Emotion makes the test of Art.
Judges august !—the same in every age,
While Passions weave the sorcery of the Stage,—
While Nature's sympathies are Art's best laws,—
To you a stranger has referr'd his cause :—
If the soft tale he woos the soul to hear
Bequeaths the moral, while it claims the tear,
Each gentler thought to faults in others shown
He calls in court—a pleader for his own !

THE
DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

Time, sunset. On the foreground an old Château; beyond, Vineyards and Woods, which present, through their openings, Views of a River, reflecting the sunset. At a distance, the turrets of the Convent of the Carmelites.

MADAME and MADEMOISELLE DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Mdlle. de la Vall. 'Tis our last eve, my mother!

Mme. de la Vall. Thou regrett'st it,
My own Louise! albeit the court invites thee—
A court beside whose glories, dull and dim
The pomp of Eastern kings, by poets told;
A court——

Mdlle. de la Vall. In which I shall not see my mother!
Nor these old walls, in which, from every stone,
Childhood speaks eloquent of happy years;
Nor vines and woods, which bade me love the earth,
Nor yonder spires, which raised that love to God!—

[*The vesper bell tolls.*
The vesper bell!—my mother, when, once more,
I hear from those grey towers that holy chime,
May thy child's heart be still as full of Heaven,
And callous to all thoughts of earth, save those
Which mirror Eden in the face of Home!

Mme. de la Vall. Do I not know thy soul?—through
every snare
My gentle dove shall 'scape with spotless plumes.

Alone in courts, I have no fear for *thee* :—
 Some natures take from Innocence the lore
 Experience teaches ; and their delicate leaves,
 Like the soft plant, shut out all wrong, and shrink
 From vice by instinct, as the wise by knowledge :
 And such is thine ! *My* voice thou wilt not hear,
 But Thought shall whisper where my voice would warn,
 And Conscience be thy mother and thy guide !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Oh, may I merit all thy care, and
 most

Thy present trust !—Thou'lt write to me, my mother,
 And tell me of thyself : amidst the court
 My childhood's images shall rise. Be kind
 To the poor cotters in the wood ;—alas !
 They'll miss me in the winter !—and my birds ?—
 Thy hand will feed them ?—

Mme. de la Vall. And that noble heart
 That loves thee as my daughter should be loved—
 The gallant Bragelone ? *—should I hear
 Some tidings Fame forgets—if in the din
 Of camps I learn thy image makes his solace,
 Shall I not write of *him* ?—

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*with indifference*]. His name will
 breathe
 Of home and friendship ;—yes !—

Mme. de la Vall. Of nought beside ?

Mdlle. de la Vall. Nay, why so pressing ?—let me change
 the theme.

The king !—you have seen him ;—is he, as they say,
 So fair—so stately ?

Mme. de la Vall. Ay, in truth, my daughter,
 A king that wins the awe he might command.
 Splendid in peace, and terrible in war ;
 Wise in the council—gentle in the bower.

Mdlle. de la Vall. Strange, that so often through mine
 early dreams

A royal vision flitted ;—a proud form,
 Upon whose brow nature had written " empire ; "
 While, on the lip,—love, smiling, wrapp'd in sunshine

* The author has, throughout this play, availed himself of the poetical
 license to give to the name of Bragelone the Italian pronunciation, and to
 accent the final *e*.

The charmèd world that was its worshipper—
 A form like that which clothed the gods of old,
 Lured from Olympus by some mortal maid,—
 Youthful it seemed—but with ambrosial youth;
 And beautiful—but half as beauty were
 A garb too earthly for a thing divine:—
 Was it not strange, my mother?

Mme. de la Vall. A child's fancy,
 Breathed into life by thy brave father's soul.
 He taught thee, in thy cradle yet, to lisp
 Thy sovereign's name in prayer—and still together,
 In thy first infant creed, were link'd the lessons
 "TO HONOUR GOD AND LOVE THE KING;" it was
 A part of that old knightly faith of France
 Which made it half religion to be loyal.

Mlle. de la Vall. It might be so. I have preserved the
 lesson,
 Ev'n with too weak a reverence.—Yet, 'tis strange!
 A dream so oft renew'd!—

Mme. de la Vall. Here comes thy lover!
 Thou wilt not blame him if his lips repeat
 The question mine have ask'd? Alphonso, welcome!

SCENE II.

BRAGELONE, MADAME and MADemoiselle DE LA
 VALLIÈRE.

Brage. My own Louise!—ah! dare I call thee so?
 War never seem'd so welcome! since we part,
 Since the soft sunshine of thy smiles must fade
 From these dear scenes, it soothes, at least to think
 I shall not linger on the haunted spot,
 And feel, forlorn amidst the gloom of absence,
 How dark is all once lighted by thine eyes.

[*MME. DE LA VALLIÈRE retires into the château.*

Mlle. de la Vall. Can friendship flatter thus?—or
 wouldst thou train
 My ear betimes to learn the courtier's speech?

Brage. Louise! Louise! this is our parting hour:
 Me war demands—and thee the court allures.
 In such an hour, the old romance allow'd
 The maid to soften from her coy reserve,
 And her true knight, from some kind words, to take
 Hope's talisman to battle!—Dear Louise!
 Say, canst thou love me?—

Mdlle. de la Vall.

Sir!—I!—love!—methinks

It is a word that——

Brage.

Sounds upon thy lips
 Like "land" upon the mariner's, and speaks
 Of home and rest after a stormy sea.
 Sweet girl, my youth has pass'd in camps; and war
 Hath somewhat scathed my manhood ere my time.
 Our years are scarce well-mated: the soft spring
 Is thine, and o'er my summer's waning noon
 Grave autumn creeps. Thou say'st "I flatter!"—well
 Love taught me first the golden words in which
 The honest heart still coins its massive ore.
 But fairer words, from falser lips, will soon
 Make *my* plain courtship rude. Louise! thy sire
 Betroth'd us in thy childhood: I have watch'd thee
 Bud into virgin May, and in thy youth
 Have seem'd to hoard my own!—I think of *thee*,
 And I am youthful still! The passionate prayer—
 The wild idolatry—the purple light
 Bathing the cold earth from a Hebe's urn;—
 Yea, all the soul's divine excess which youth
 Claims as its own, came back when first I loved thee!
 And yet so well I love, that if thy heart
 Recoil from mine,—if but one single wish,
 A shade more timid than the fear which ever
 Blends trembling twilight with the starry hope
 Of maiden dreams, would start thee from our union,—
 Speak, and my suit is tongueless!

Mdlle. de la Vall.

Oh, my lord!

If to believe all France's chivalry
 Boasts not a nobler champion,—if to feel
 Proud in your friendship, honour'd in your trust,—
 If this be love, and I have known no other,
 Why then——

Brage. Why then, thou lov'st me!

Mlle. de la Vall. [*aside*]. Shall I say it?
I feel 'twere to deceive him! Is it love?

Love, no, it is *not* love!—[*Aloud.*] My noble lord,
As yet I know not all mine own weak heart;
I would not pain thee, yet would not betray.
Legend and song have often painted love,
And my heart whispers not the love which should be
The answer to thine own:—thou hadst best forget me!

Brage. Forget!

Mlle. de la Vall. I am not worthy of thee!

Brage. Hold!—

My soul is less heroic than I deem'd it.
Perchance my passion asks too much from thine
And would forestall the fruit ere yet the blossom
Blushes from out the coy and maiden leaves.
No! let *me* love; and say, perchance the time
May come when *thou* wilt bid me *not* forget thee.
Absence may plead my cause; it hath some magic;
I fear not contrast with the courtier-herd;
And thou art not Louise if thou art won
By a smooth outside and a honey'd tongue,
No! when thou seest these hunters after power,
These shadows, minion'd to the royal sun,—
Proud to the humble, servile to the great,—
Perchance thou'lt learn how much one honest heart,
That never wrong'd a friend or shunn'd a foe,—
How much the old hereditary knighthood,
Faithful to God, to glory, and to love,
Outweighs a universe of cringing courtiers!
Louise, I ask no more!—I bide my time!

Re-enter MME. DE LA VALLIÈRE from the château.

Mme. de la Vall. The twilight darkens. Art thou, now
Alphonso,

Convinced her heart is such as thou wouldst have it?

Brage. It is a heavenly tablet—but my name
Good angels have not writ there!

Mme. de la Vall. Nay, as yet,
Love wears the mask of friendship: she must love thee.

Brage. [*half incredulously*]. Think'st thou so?

Mme. de la Vall.

Ay, be sure!

Brage.

I'll think so too.

[*Turns to MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE.*

Bright lady of my heart!—[*Aside.*] By Heaven! 'tis true!

The rose grows richer on her cheek, like hues

That in the silence of the virgin dawn,

Predict, in blushes, light that glads the earth.

Her mother spoke aright;—ah, yes, she loves me!

Bright lady of my heart, farewell! and yet

Again—farewell!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Honour and health be with you!

Mme. de la Vall. Nay, my Louise, when warriors wend
to battle,

The maid they serve grows half a warrior too;

And does not blush to bind on mailed bosoms

The banner of her colours.

Brage.

Dare I ask it?

Mdlle. de la Vall. A soldier's child could never blush, my
lord,

To belt so brave a breast;—and yet,—well, wear it.

[*Placing her scarf round BRAGELONE'S hauberk.*

Brage. Ah! add for thy sake.

Mdlle. de la Vall.

For the sake of one

Who honours worth, and ne'er since Bayard fell,

Have banners flaunted o'er a knight more true

To France and Fame;—

Brage.

And love?

Mdlle. de la Vall.

Nay, hush, my lord;

I said not that.

Brage.

But France and Fame shall say it!

Yes, if thou hear'st men speak of Bragelone,

If proudest chiefs confess he bore him bravely,

Come life, come death, his glory shall be thine,

And all the light it borrow'd from thine eyes,

Shall gild thy name. Ah! scorn not *then* to say,

"He loved me well!" How well! God shield and bless
thee!

[*Exit BRAGELONE.*

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*aside*]. Most worthy love! *why* can I
love him not?

Mme. de la Vall. Peace to his gallant heart! when next
we meet,

May I have gain'd a son—and thou—

Mlle. de la Vall. [quickly]. My mother,
 This night let every thought be given to thee!
 Beautiful scene, farewell!—farewell, my home!
 And thou, grey convent, whose inspiring chime
 Measures the hours with prayer, that morn and eve
 Life may ascend the ladder of the angels,
 And climb to heaven! serene retreats, farewell!
 And now, my mother!—no! some hours must yet
 Pass ere our parting.

Mme. de la Vall. Cheer thee, my Louise!
 And let us now within; the dews are falling—

Mlle. de la Vall. And I forgot how ill thy frame may
 bear them.

Pardon!—within, within!—

*[Stopping short and gazing fondly on MME. DE LA
 VALLIÈRE.]*

Your hand, dear mother?

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

An old Armoury, of the heavy French Architecture preceding the time of Francis the First, in the Castle of BRAGELONE. BERTRAND, the armourer, employed in polishing a sword.

Bert. There now? I think this blade will scarcely
 shame
 My gallant master's hand; it was the weapon,
 So legends say, with which the old Lord Rodolph
 Slew, by the postern gate, his lady's leman!
 Oh, we're a haughty race—we old French lords;
 Our honour is unruined as our steel,
 And, when provoked, as ruthless!

Enter BRAGELONE.

Brage. Ah, old Bertrand!
 Why, your brave spirit, 'mid these coats of mail,
 Grows young again. So! this, then, is the sword
 You'd have me wear. God wot! a trenchant blade,
 Not of the modern fashion.

Bert. My good lord,
 Yourself are scarcely of the modern fashion.
 They tell me, that to serve one's king for nothing,
 To deem one's country worthier than one's self,
 To hold one's honour not a phrase to swear by.—
 They tell me, now, all *this* is out of fashion.
 Come, take the sword, my lord!—you have your father's
 Stout arm and lordly heart: they're out of fashion,
 And yet you keep the one—come, take the other.

Brage. Why you turn satirist!

Ber. Satirist! what is that?

Brage. Satirists, my friend, are men who speak the
 truth

That courts may say—they do not know the fashion!
 Satire on Vice is Wit's revenge on fools
 That slander Virtue. How now! look ye, Bertrand!
 Methinks there is a notch here.

Ber. Ay, my lord;
 I would not grind it out;—'twas here the blade
 Clove through the helmet, ev'n unto the chin,
 Of that irreverent and most scoundrel Dutchman
 Who stabb'd you, through your hauberk-joints—what
 time

You placed your breast before the king.

Brage. Hence, ever
 Be it believed, that, in his hour of need,
 A king's sole safeguard are his subjects' hearts!
 Ha, ha! good sword! that was a famous stroke!
 Thou didst brave deeds that day, thou quaint old servant,
 Though now—thou'rt not the fashion.

Ber. Bless that look,
 And that glad laugh! they bring me back the day
 When first old Bertrand arm'd you for the wars,—
 A fair-faced stripling; yet, beshrew my heart,
 You spurr'd that field before the bearded chins,
 And saved the gallant Lord La Vallière's standard,
 And yet you were a stripling then.

Brage. La Vallière!
 The very name goes dancing through my veins.
 Bertrand, look round the armoury. Is there nought
 I wore that first campaign? Nay, nay! no matter,
 I wear the *name within* me. Hark ye, Bertrand!

We're not so young as then we were : when next
We meet, old friend, we both will end our labours,
And find some nook, amidst yon antique trophies,
Wherein to hang this idle mail.

Ber.

Huzza !

The village dames speak truth—my Lord will marry !
And I shall nurse, in these old wither'd arms,
Another boy—for France another hero.
Ha, ha ! I am so happy.

Brage.

Good old man !

Why this is like my father's hall—since thus
My father's servants love me.

Ber.

All must love you !

Brage. All !—let me think so.

[*Bugle sounds.*

Hark, the impatient bugle !

I hear the neigh of my exultant charger,
Breathing from far the glorious air of war.
Give me the sword !

Enter Servant, with a letter.

Her mother's hand !—" Louise,

Arrived at court, writes sadly, and amidst
The splendour pines for home,"—I knew she would !
My own Louise !—" Speaks much of the king's good-
ness ;"—

Goodness to her !—that thought shall give the king
A tenfold better soldier !—" From thy friend,
Who trusts ere long to hail thee as her son."

Her son !—a blessed name. These lines shall be
My heart's true shield and ward away each weapon.

He who shall wed Louise has conquer'd Fate,
And smiles at earthly foes !—Again the bugle !
Give me your hand, old man. My fiery youth

Went not to battle with so blithe a soul

As now burns in me. So ! she pines for home—

I knew she would—I knew it ! Farewell, Bertrand !

[*Exit BRAGELONE.*

Ber. Oh ! there'll be merry doings in the hall
When my dear lord returns ! A merry wedding,
And then—and then—oh, such a merry christening !
How well I fancy his grave manly face
Brightening upon his first-born.

[*As he is going.*

Re-enter BRAGELONE.

Brage. Ho, there! Bertrand!
One charg  I had forgot :—Be sure they train
The woodbine richly round the western wing—
My mother's old apartment. Well, man! well!
Do you not hear me?

Ber. You, my lord! the woodbine?

Brage. Yes; see it duly done. I know she loves it;
It clammers round her lattice. I would not
Have one thing absent she could miss.

Remember!

[*Exit BRAGELONE*]

Ber. And this is he whom warriors call "the Stern!"
The dove's heart beats beneath that lion breast.
Pray Heaven his lady may deserve him! Oh,
What news for my good dame!—i' faith, I'm glad
I was the first to learn the secret. So,
This year a wife—next year a boy! I'll teach
The young rogue how his father clove the Dutchman
Down to the chin! Ha, ha! old Bertrand now
Will be of use again on winter nights,—
I know he'll be the picture of his father.

[*Exit BERTRAND.*]

SCENE IV.

An Antechamber in the Palace of Fontainebleau.

Enter LAUZUN and GRAMMONT at opposite doors.

Lau. Ah, Count, good day! Were you at court last night?

Gram. Yes; and the court has grown the richer by
A young new beauty.

Lau. So!—her name?

Gram. La Valli re.

Lau. Ay, I have heard;—a maid of honour?

Gram. Yes.

The women say she's plain.

Lau. The women! oh,
The case it is that's plain—*she* must be lovely.

Gram. The dear, kind gossips of the court declare
The pretty novice hath conceived a fancy—
A wild, romantic, innocent, strange fancy—
For our young king; a girlish love, like that
Told of in fairy tales: she saw his picture,
Sigh'd to the canvas, murmur'd to the colours,
And—fell in love with carmine and gambouge.

Lau. The simple dreamer! Well, she saw the king?

Gram. And while she saw him, like a rose, when May
Breathes o'er its bending bloom, she seem'd to shrink
Into her modest self, and a low sigh
Shook blushes (sweetest rose-leaves!) from her beauty.

Lau. You paint it well.

Gram. And ever since that hour
She bears the smiling malice of her comrades
With an unconscious and an easy sweetness;
As if alike *her* virtue and *his* greatness
Made love impossible: so, down the stream
Of purest thought, her heart glides on to danger.

Lau. Did Louis note her?—Has he heard the gossip?

Gram. Neither, methinks: his Majesty is cold.
The art of pomp, and not the art of love,
Tutors his skill—Augustus more than Ovid.

Lau. The time will come. The king as yet is young,
Flush'd with the novelty of sway, and fired
With the great dream of cutting Dutchmen's throats:
A tiresome dream—the poets call it "Glory."

Gram. So much the better,—'tis one rival less;
The handsome king would prove a dangerous suitor.

Lau. Oh, hang the danger! He must have a mistress;
'Tis an essential to a court: how many
Favours, one scarcely likes to ask a king,
One flatters from a king's innamorata!
We courtiers fatten on the royal vices;
And, while the king lives chaste, he cheats, he robs me
Of ninety-nine per cent.!

Gram. Ha, ha! Well, duke,
We meet again to-night. You join the revels?
Till then, adieu.

Lau. Adieu, dear count.

[*Exit* GRAMMONT.
The king

Must have a mistress : I must lead that mistress.
 The times are changed !—'twas by the sword and spear
 Our fathers bought ambition—vulgar butchers !
 But now our wit's our spear—intrigue our armour ;
 The antechamber is our field of battle ;
 And the best hero is—the cleverest rogue ?

[Exit LAUZUN.]

SCENE V.

Night—the Gardens of the Fontainebleau, brilliantly illuminated with coloured lamps—Fountains, vases, and statues in perspective—A pavilion in the background—to the right the Palace of the Fontainebleau, illuminated. Enter Courtiers, Ladies, &c.*

A Dance.

Enter LOUIS followed by Courtiers, &c.

Louis. Fair eve and pleasant revels to you all !
 Ah, Duke !—a word with you.

[Courtiers give way.]

Thou hast seen, my Lauzun,

The new and fairest floweret of our court,
 This youngest of the graces—sweet La Vallière,
 Blushing beneath the world's admiring eyes ?

Lau. [Aside]. (So, so !—he's caught !) Your Majesty
 speaks warmly ;

Your praise is just—and grateful—

Louis.

Grateful ?

Lau.

Ay.

Know you not, Sire, it is the jest, among
 The pretty prattlers of the royal chamber,
 That this young Dian of the woods has found
 Endymion in a king—a summer dream,
 Bright, but with vestal fancies !—scarcely love,
 But that wild interval of hopes and fears
 Through which the child glides, trembling, to the woman ?

Louis. Blest thought ! Oh, what a picture of delight
 Your words have painted !—

* The effect of the scene should be principally made by jets-d'eau, water-falls, &c.

Lau. While we speak, behold,
Through yonder alleys, with her sister planets,
Your moonlight beauty gleams.

Louis. 'Tis she!—this shade
Shall hide us!—quick—

[*Enters one of the bosquets.*
Lau. [*following him*]. I trust my creditors
Will grow the merrier from this night's adventure.

Enter MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE and Maids of Honour.

First Maid. How handsome looks the Duke de Guiche
to-night!

Second Maid. Well, to my taste, the graceful Gram-
mont bears

The bell from all!—

Third Maid. But, then, that charming Lauzun
Has so much wit.

First Maid. And which, of all these gallants,
May please the fair La Vallière most?

Mdlle. de la Vall. In truth,
I scarcely mark'd them; when the king is by,
Who can have eye, or ear, or thought for others?

First Maid. You raise your fancies high!

Second Maid. And raise them vainly!
The king disdains all love!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Who spoke of love?
The sunflower, gazing on the Lord of heaven,
Asks but its sun to shine!—Who spoke of love?
And who would wish the bright and lofty Louis
To stoop from glory? Love should not confound
So great a spirit with the herd of men.
Who spoke of love?—

First Maid. My country friend, you talk
Extremely well; but some young lord will teach you
To think of Louis less, and more of love.

Mdlle. de la Vall. Nay, ev'n the very presence of his
greatness
Exalts the heart from each more low temptation.
He seems to walk the earth as if to raise
And purify our wandering thoughts, by fixing
Thought on himself;—and she who thinks on Louis
Shuts out the world, and scorns the name of love!

First Maid. Wait till you're tried—

[*Music.*

But, hark! the music chides us

For wasting this most heavenly night so idly.

Come! let us join the dancers.

[*Exeunt Maids.*

[*As LA VALLIÈRE follows, the King steals from the bosquet, and takes her hand, while LAUZUN retires in the opposite direction.*

Louis.

Sweet La Vallière!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Ah!—

Louis. Nay, fair lady, fly not, ere we welcome
Her who gives night its beauty!

Mdlle. de la Vall.

Sire, permit me!

My comrades wait me.

Louis.

What! my loveliest subject

So soon a rebel? Silent!—Well, be mute,
And teach the world the eloquence of blushes.

Mdlle. de la Vall. I may not listen—

Louis.

What if I had set

Thyself the example? What if I had listen'd,
Veil'd by yon friendly boughs, and dared to dream
That one blest word which spoke of Louis absent
Might charm his presence, and make Nature music?

Mdlle. de la Vall. You did not, Sire! you could not!

Louis.

Could not hear thee,

Nor pine for these divine, unwitness'd moments,
To pray thee, dearest lady, to divorce
No more the thought of love from him who loves thee.
And—faithful still to glory—swears thy heart
Unfolds the fairest world a king can conquer!
Hear me, Louise!

Mdlle. de la Vall. No, Sire; forget those words!
I am not what their foolish meaning spoke me,
But a poor simple girl, who loves her king,
And honour more. Forget, and do not scorn me!

[*Exit MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE.*

Louis. Her modest coyness fires me more than all
Her half-unconscious and most virgin love.

*Enter Courtiers, Ladies, Guests, &c.; LAUZUN,
GRAMMONT, and MONTESPAN.*

Well, would the dancers pause awhile?

Lau. Ev'n pleasure
Wearies at last.

Louis. We've but to change its aspect,
And it resumes its freshness. Ere the banquet
Calls us, my friends, we have prepared a game
To shame the lottery of this life, wherein
Each prize is neighbour'd by a thousand blanks.
Methinks it is the duty of a monarch
To set the balance right, and bid the wheel
Shower nought but prizes on the hearts he loves.
What ho, there! with a merry music, raise
Fortune, to show how Merit conquers Honours!

[*Music.*
The Pavilion at the back of the stage opens, and discovers the Temple of Fortune superbly illuminated. Fortune; at her feet, a wheel of light; at either hand, a golden vase, over each of which presides a figure—the one representing Merit, the other Honour.

Louis. Approach, fair dames and gallants! Aye, as now,
May Fortune smile upon the friends of Louis!

[*The Courtiers and Ladies group around the vases. From the one over which Merit presides they draw lots, and receive in return from Honour various gifts of jewels, &c.*

Enter MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE at the back of the stage.

Louis [*to Mdle. de la Vall.*]. Nay, if you smile not on
me, then the scene
Hath lost its charm.

Mdle. de la Vall. Oh, Sire, all eyes are on us!

Louis. All eyes should learn where homage should be
render'd.

Mdle. de la Vall. I pray you, Sire——

Lau. Will't please your Majesty
To try your fortune?

Louis. Fortune! Sweet La Vallière,
I only seek my fortune in thine eyes.

[*Music.* *LOUIS draws, and receives a diamond bracelet. Ladies crowd round.*

First Lady. How beautiful!

Second Lady. Each gem were worth a duchy !

Third Lady. Oh, happy she upon whose arm the king
Will bind the priceless band !

Louis [*approaching Mdle. de la Vall.*] Permit me, lady.
[*Clasps the bracelet.*]

Lau. Well done—well play'd ! In that droll game call'd
Woman,

Diamonds are always trumps for hearts.

First Lady.

Her hair's

Too light !

Second Lady. Her walk is so provincial !

Third Lady. D'ye think she paints ?

Lau.

Ha, ha ! What envious eyes,

What fawning smiles, await the king's new mistress !

ACT II.—SCENE I.

*The Gardens of the Fontainebleau.**Enter BRAGELONE.*

Brage. Why did we suffer her to seek the court?
It is a soil in which the reptile Slander
Still coils in slime around the fairest flower.
Can it be true?—Strange rumours pierced my tent
Coupling her name with—pah!—how foul the thought
is!—

The maid the king loves!—Fie! I'll not believe it!
I left the camp—sped hither: if she's lost,
Why then!—down—down, base heart! wouldst thou
suspect her?

Thou—who shouldst be her shelter from suspicion?
But I may warn, advise, protect, and save her—
Save—'tis a fearful word!

Enter LAUZUN.

Lau. Lord Bragelone!
Methought your warrior spirit never breathed
The air of palaces! No evil tidings,
I trust, from Dunkirk?

Brage. No. The *fleur-de-lis*
Rears her white crest unstain'd. Mine own affairs
Call me to court.

Lau. Affairs! I hate the word;
It sounds like debts.

Brage. [*Aside*]. This courtier may instruct me.
[*Aloud.*] Our king—he bears him well?

Lau. Oh, bravely, Marquis;
Engaged with this new palace of Versailles.
It costs some forty millions!

Brage. Ay, the People
Groan at the burthen.

Lau. People!—what's the *People*?
I never heard that word at court! The *People*!

Brage. I doubt not, duke. The People, like the Air,
Is rarely heard, save when it speaks in thunder.
I pray you grace for that old-fashion'd phrase.
What is the latest news?

Lau. His Majesty
Dines half an hour before his usual time.
That's the last news at court!—it makes sensation!

Brage. Is there no weightier news? I heard at Dunkirk
How the king loved a——loved a certain maiden—
The brave La Vallière's daughter.

Lau. How, my lord,
How can you vegetate in such a place?
I fancy the next tidings heard at Dunkirk
Will be that—Adam's dead!

Brage. The news is old, then?

Lau. News! *news*, indeed! Why, by this time, our
lackeys

Have worn the gossip threadbare. News!—

Brage. The lady
(She is a soldier's child) hath not yet barter'd
Her birthright for ambition? She rejects him?
Speak!—She rejects him?

Lau. Humph!

Brage. Oh, duke, I know
This courtier air—this most significant silence—
With which your delicate race are wont to lie
Away all virtue! Shame upon your manhood!
Speak out, and say Louise La Vallière lives
To prove to courts—that woman *can* be honest!

Lau. Marquis, you're warm.

Brage. You dare not speak;—I knew it!

Lau. Dare not?

Brage. Oh, yes, you dare, with hints and smiles,
To darken fame—to ruin the defenceless—
Blight with a gesture—wither with a sneer!
Did I say "dare not?"—No man dares it better!

Lau. My lord, these words must pass not!

Brage. Duke, forgive me!
I am a rough, stern soldier—taught from youth
To brave offence, and by the sword alone
Maintain the license of my speech. Oh, say—
Say but one word!—say this poor maid is sinless,

And, for her father's sake—(*her father loved me!*)
I'll kneel to thee for pardon!

Lau. Good, my lord,
I know not your interest in this matter :
'Tis said that Louis loves the fair La Vallière;
But what of that?—good taste is not a crime!
'Tis said La Vallière does not hate the king;
But what of that?—it does but prove her—loyal!
I know no more. I trust you're satisfied;
If not——

Brage. Thou liest!

Lau. Nay, then, draw!

[*They fight—after a few passes, LAUZUN is disarmed.*]

Brage. There, take
Thy sword. Alas! each slanderer wears a weapon
No honest arm can baffle—*this is edgeless.*

[*Exit BRAGELONE.*]

Lau. Pleasant! This comes, now, of one's condescending
To talk with men who cannot understand
The tone of good society. Poor fellow!

[*Exit LAUZUN.*]

SCENE II.

Enter MADEMOISELLE DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Mdlle. de la Vall. He loves me, then! He loves me!
Love! wild word!

Did I say love? Dishonour, shame, and crime
Dwell on the thought! And yet—and yet—he loves me!

[*Re-enter BRAGELONE, at the back of the stage.—She takes out the King's picture.*]

Mine early dreams were prophets!—Steps! The king?

Brage. No, lady; pardon me;—a joint mistake;
You sought the king—and I Louise la Vallière!

Mdlle. de la Vall. You here, my lord!—you here!

Brage. There was a maiden
Fairer than many fair; but sweet and humble,
And good and spotless, through the vale of life
She walk'd, her modest path with blessings strew'd
(For all men bless'd her); from her crystal name,

Like the breath i' the mirror, even envy pass'd :
 I sought that maiden at the court ; none knew her.
 May I ask you—where now Louise la Vallière ?

Mdlle. de la Vall. Cruel !—unjust ! You were my father's friend,

Dare you speak thus to me ?

Brage. Dare ! dare !—'Tis well.

You have learnt your state betimes !—

Mdlle. de la Vall. My state, my lord !

I know not by what right you thus assume

The privilege of insult !

Brage. Ay, reproach !

The harlot's trick—for shame ! Oh, no, your pardon !

You are too high for shame : and so—farewell !

Mdlle. de la Vall. My lord !—my lord, in pity—No !—in justice,

Leave me not thus !

Brage. Louise !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Have they belied me ?

Speak, my good lord !—What crime have I committed ?

Brage. No crime—at courts ! 'Tis only Heaven and Honour

That deem it aught but—most admired good fortune !

Many, who swept in careless pride before

The shrinking, spotless, timorous La Vallière,

Will now fawn round thee, and with bended knees

Implore sweet favour of the king's kind mistress.

Ha, ha !—this is not crime ! Who calls it crime ?

Do prudes say " Crime ? " Go, bribe them, and they'll swear

Its name is greatness. Crime, indeed !—ha, ha !

Mdlle. de la Vall. My heart finds words at length !—'Tis false !

Brage. 'Tis false !

Why, speak again ! Say once more it is false—

'Tis false !—again, 'tis false !

Mdlle. de la Vall. Alas, I'm wretched !

Brage. No, lady, no ! not wretched, if not guilty !

[*MADemoiselle de la Vallière, after walking to and fro in great agitation, seats herself on one of the benches of the garden, and covers her face with her hands.*]

Brage [*Aside*]. Are these the tokens of remorse? No matter!

I loved her well! And love is pride, not love,
If it forsake ev'n guilt amidst its sorrows!
[*Aloud*.] Louise!—Louise!—Speak to thy friend, Louise!
Thy father's friend!—thine own!

Mdlle. de la Vall. This hated court!
Why came I hither? Wherefore have I closed
My heart against its own most pleading dictates?
Why clung to virtue, if the brand of vice
Sear my good name?

Brage. That, when thou pray'st to Heaven,
Thy soul may ask for *comfort*—not *forgiveness*!

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*rising eagerly*]. A blessed thought! I
thank thee!

Brage. Thou art innocent!
Thou hast denied the king?

Mdlle. de la Vall. I have denied him.

Brage. Curst be the lies that wrong'd thee!—doubly
curst

The hard, the icy selfishness of soul,
That, but to pander to an hour's caprice,
Blasted that flower of life—fair fame! Accurst
The king who casts his purple o'er his vices!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Hold!—thou malign'st thy king!

Brage. He spared not thee.

Mdlle. de la Vall. The king!—Heaven bless him!

Brage. Would'st thou madden me?
Thou!—No—thou lov'st him not?—thou hid'st thy face!
Woman, thou tremblest! Lord of Hosts, for this
Hast thou preserved me from the foeman's sword,
And through the incarnadined and raging seas
Of war upheld me?—made both life and soul
The sleepless priests to that fair idol—Honour?
Was it for this? I loved thee not, Louise,
As gallants love! Thou wert this life's IDEAL,
Breathing through earth the Lovely and the Holy,
And clothing Poetry in human beauty!
When in this gloomy world they spoke of sin,
I thought of thee, and smiled—for thou wert sinless!
And when they told of some diviner act
That made our nature noble, my heart whisper'd—

"So would have done Louise!"—"Twas thus I loved thee!
To lose thee, I can bear it; but to lose,
With thee, all hope, all confidence, of virtue—
This—*this* is hard!—Oh! I am sick of earth!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Nay, speak not thus;—be gentle with me. Come,

I am not what thou deem'st me, Bragelone;
Woman I am, and weak. Support, advise me!
Forget the lover, but be still the friend.
Do not desert me—*thou*!

Brage. Thou lov'st the king!

Mdlle. de la Vall. But I can fly from love.

Brage. Poor child! And whither?

Mdlle. de la Vall. Take me to the old castle, to my mother.

Brage. The king can reach thee there!

Mdlle. de la Vall. He'll not attempt it.

Alas! in courts, how quickly men forget!

Brage. Not till their victim hath surrender'd all!

Hadst thou but yielded, why thou might'st have lived
Beside his very threshold, safe, unheeded;
But thus, with all thy bloom of heart unruffled,—
The fortress storm'd, not conquer'd,—why man's pride,
If not man's lust, would shut thee from escape!
Art thou in earnest,—wouldst thou truly fly
From gorgeous infamy to tranquil honour,
God's house alone may shelter thee!

Mdlle. de la Vall.

The convent!

Alas! alas! to meet those eyes no more!

Never to hear that voice!

Brage. [departing]. Enough.

Mdlle. de la Vall. Yet, stay!

I'll see him once! one last farewell—and then—

Yes, to the convent!

Brage.

I have done!—and yet,

Ere I depart, take back the scarf thou gav'st me.
Then didst "thou honour worth!" now, gift and giver
Alike are worthless.

Mdlle. de la Vall. Worthless! Didst thou hear me?
Have I not said that—

Brage.

Thou wouldst see the king!

Vice first, and virtue after! O'er the marge

Of the abyss thou tremblest. One step more,
And from all heaven the Angels shall cry "*Lost!*"
Thou ask'st that single step! Wouldst thou be saved?
Lose not a moment.—Come!

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*in great agony*]. Beside that tree,
When stars shone soft, he vow'd for aye to love me!

Brage. Think of thy mother! At this very hour
She blesses Heaven that thou wert born—the last
Fair scion of a proud and stainless race.
To-morrow, and thy shame may cast a shade
Over a hundred 'scutcheons, and thy mother
Feel thou wert born that *she* might long to die!
Come!

Mdlle. de la Vall. I am ready—take my hand.

[*Her eye falls on the bracelet.*
Away!

This is his gift! And shall I leave him thus?
Not one kind word to break the shock of parting—

Brage. And break a mother's heart!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Be still! Thou'rt man!
Thou canst not feel as woman feels!—her weakness
Thou canst not sound. O Louis, Heaven protect thee!
May fate look on thee with La Vallière's eyes!
Now I am ready, sir. Thou'st seen how weak
Woman is ever where she loves. Now, learn,
Proportion'd to that weakness is the strength
With which she conquers love! O Louis, Louis!
Quick! take me hence!—

Brage. The heart she wrongs hath saved her!
And is that all!—The shelter for mine age—
The Hope that was the garner for Affection—
The fair and lovely tree, beneath whose shade
The wearied soldier thought to rest at last,
And watch life's sun go calm and cloudless down,
Smiling the day to sleep—all, all lie shatter'd!
No matter. I have saved thy soul from sorrow,
Whose hideous depth thy vision cannot fathom.
Joy!—I have saved thee!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Ah! when last we parted
I told thee, of thy love I was not worthy.
Another shall replace me!

Brage. [*smiling sadly*]. Hush! Another!

No!—See, I wear thy colours still! Though Hope
 Wanes from the plate, the dial still remains,
 And takes no light from stars! I—I am nothing!
 But thou—Nay, weep not! Yet these tears are honest:
 Thou hast not lived to make the Past one blot,
 Which life in vain would weep away! Poor maiden!
 I could not cheer thee *then*. Now, joy!—I've saved thee!
 [*Exeunt MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE and BRAGELONE.*]

SCENE III.

*The King's Cabinet at Fontainebleau; * the King seated at a table, covered with papers, &c., writing.*

Enter LAUZUN.

Louis. Lauzun, I sent for you. Your zeal has served me,
 And I am grateful. There, this order gives you
 The lands and lordship of De Vesci.

Lau. Sire,
 How shall I thank your goodness?

Louis. Hush!—by silence!

Lau. [*aside.*] A king's forbidden fruit has pretty wind-falls!

Louis. This beautiful Louise! I never loved
 Till now.

Lau. She yields not yet?

Louis. But gives refusal
 A voice that puts ev'n passion to the blush
 To own one wish so soft a heart denies it!

Lau. A woman's No! is but a crooked path
 Unto a woman's Yes! Your Majesty
 Saw her to-day?

Louis. No!—Grammont undertakes
 To bear, in secret, to her hand, some lines
 That pray a meeting.—I await his news.

[*Continues writing.*]

* To some it may be interesting to remember that this cabinet, in which the most powerful of the Bourbon kings is represented as rewarding the minister of his pleasures, is the same as that in which is yet shown the table upon which Napoleon Bonaparte (son of a gentleman of Corsica) signed the abdication of the titles and dominions of Charlemagne!

Lau. [*aside*]. I'll not relate my tilt with Bragelone.
First, I came off the worst.—No man of sense
Ever confesses that! And, secondly,
This most officious, curious, hot-brain'd Quixote
Might make him jealous; jealous kings are peevish;
And, if he fall to questioning the lady,
She'll learn who told the tale, and spite the teller.
Oh! the great use of logic!

Louis. 'Tis in vain
I strive by business to beguile impatience!
How my heart beats!—Well, count!

Enter GRAMMONT.

Gram. Alas, my liege!

Louis. Alas!—Speak out!

Gram. The court has lost La Vallière!

Louis. Ha!—lost!

Gram. She has fled, and none guess whither.

Louis. Fled!

I'll not believe it!—Fled!

Lau. What matters, sire?

No spot is sacred from the king!

Louis. By Heaven

I am a king!—Not all the arms of Europe
Could wrest one jewel from my crown. And she—
What is my crown to her! I am a king!
Who stands between the king and her he loves
Becomes a traitor—and may find a tyrant!
Follow me!

[*Exit LOUIS.*]

Gram. Who e'er heard of maids of honour
Flying from kings?

Lau. Ah, had *you* been a maid,
How kind you would have been, you rogue!—Come on!

[*Exeunt LAUZUN and GRAMMONT.*]

SCENE IV.

The Cloisters of a Convent—Night—Thunder and Lightning, the latter made visible through the long oriel windows.

Mdlle. de la Vall. [rising]. Darkly the night sweeps on.
No thought of sleep

Steals to my heart. What sleep is to the world
Prayer is to me—life's balm, and grief's oblivion!
Yes, ev'n before the altar of my God,
Unhallow'd fire is raging through my veins—
Heav'n on my lips, but earth within my heart—
And while I pray *his* memory prompts the prayer,
And all I ask of Heaven is—"Guard my Louis!"
Forget him—that I dare not pray! I would not,
Ev'n if I could, be happy, and forget him!

[*Thunder.*

Roll on, roll on, dark chariot of the storm,
Whose wheels are thunder!—the rack'd elements
Can furnish forth no tempest like the war
Of passions in one weak and erring heart!

[*The bell tolls one.*

Hark to night's funeral knell! How through the roar
Of winds and thunder thrills that single sound,
Solemnly audible!—the tongue of time,
In time's most desolate hour!—it bids us muse
On worlds which love can reach not! Life runs fast
To its last sands! To bed, to bed!—to tears
And wishes for the grave!—to bed, to bed!

[*A trumpet is heard without.*

Two or three Nuns hurry across the stage.

First Nun. Most strange!

Second Nun. In such a night, too! The great gates,
That ne'er unclosed save to a royal guest,
Unbarr'd!

Mdlle. de la Vall. What fear, what hope, by turns dis-
tracts me!

[*The trumpet sounds again.*

First Nun. Hark! in the court, the ring of hoofs!—
the door
Creaks on the sullen hinge!

Lau. [*without*]. Make way!—the king!

Enter LOUIS and LAUZUN.

Mdlle. de la Vall. [*rushing forward*]. Oh, Louis!—oh,
beloved! [*Then pausing abruptly.*] No, touch me
not!

Leave me! in pity leave me! Heavenly Father,
I fly to thee! Protect me from his arms—
Protect me from myself!

Louis. Oh bliss!—Louise!

Enter Abbess and other Nuns.

Abbess. Peace, peace! What clamour desecrates the
shrine
And solitudes of God?

Lau. Madam, your knee—
The king!

Abbess. The king!—you mock me, sir!

Louis [*quitting MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE*]. Behold
Your sovereign, reverend mother! We have come
To thank you for your shelter of this lady,
And to reclaim our charge.

Abbess. My liege, these walls
Are sacred even from the purple robe
And sceptred hand.

Louis. She hath not ta'en the vow!
She's free!—we claim her!—she is of our court!
Woman,—go to!

Abbess. The maiden, sire, is free!
Your royal lips have said it!—She is free!
And if this shrine her choice, whoe'er compels her
Forth from the refuge, doth incur the curse
The Roman Church awards to even kings!
Speak, lady!—dost thou claim against the court
The asylum of the cloister?

Louis. Darest thou brave us?

Lau. [*aside to Louis*]. Pardon, my liege!—reflect! Let
not the world
Say that the king—

Louis. Can break his bonds!—Away!
I was a man before I was a king!

[*Approaching MDLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE.*

Lady, we do command your presence! [*Lowering his voice.*]
Sweet!

Adored Louise!—if ever to your ear
My whispers spoke in music—if my life
Be worth the saving, do not now desert me!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Let me not hear him, Heaven!—

Strike all my senses!

Make—make me dumb, deaf, blind,—but keep me honest!

Abbess. Sire, you have heard her answer!

Louis [*advancing passionately, pauses, and then with great dignity.*]

Abbess, no!

This lady was intrusted to our charge—

A fatherless child!—the king is now her father!

Madam, we would not wrong you; but we know

That sometimes most unhallow'd motives wake

Your zeal for converts!—This young maid is wealthy,

And nobly born!—Such proselytes may make

A convent's pride, but oft a convent's victims!

No more!—we claim the right the law awards us,

Free and alone to commune with this maiden.

If then her choice go with you—be it so;

We are no tyrant! Peace!—retire!

Abbess.

My liege!

Forgive—

Louis. We do! Retire!

[*LAUZUN, the Abbess, &c., withdraw.*

Louis.

We are alone!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Alone!—No, God is present, and the
conscience!

Louis. Ah! fear'st thou, then, that heart that would
resign

Ev'n love itself to guard one pang from thee?

Mdlle. de la Vall. I must speak!—Sire, if every drop of
blood

Were in itself a life, I'd shed them all

For one hour's joy to thee!—But fame and virtue—

My father's grave—my mother's lonely age—

These, these—

[*Thunder.*

I hear their voice!—the fires of Heaven

Seem to me like the eyes of angels, and
Warn me against myself!—Farewell!

Louis. Louise,
I will not hear thee! What! farewell! that word
Sounds like a knell to all that's worth the living!
Farewell! why, then, farewell all peace to Louis,
And the poor king is once more but a thing
Of state and forms. The impulse and the passion—
The blessed air of happy human life—
The all that made him envy not his subjects,
Dies in that word! Ah, canst thou—dar'st thou say it?

Mdlle. de la Vall. Oh, speak not thus!—Speak harshly!
threat, command!—
Be all the king!

Louis. The king! he kneels to thee!

Mdlle. de la Vall. I'm weak—be generous! My own
soul betrays me;
But thou betray me not!

Louis. Nay, hear me, sweet one!
Desert me not this once, and I will swear
To know no guiltier wish—to curb my heart—
To banish hope from love—and nurse no dream
Thy spotless soul itself shall blush to cherish!
Hear me, Louise—thou lov'st me?

Mdlle. de la Vall. Love thee, Louis!

Louis. Thou lov'st me,—then confide! Who loves, trusts
ever!

Mdlle. de la Vall. Trust thee!—ah! dare I?

Louis [*clasping her in his arms*]. Ay, till death! What
ho!

Lauzun! I say!

Enter LAUZUN.

Mdlle. de la Vall. No, no!

Louis. Not trust me, dearest?

[*She falls on his shoulder—the Abbess and Nuns
advance.*]

Abbess. Still firm!

Lau. No, madam!—Way there for the king!

ACT III.—SCENE I.

An Antechamber in the Palace of MADAME LA DUCHESSE DE LA VALLIÈRE at Versailles.

*Enter LAUZUN and MADAME DE MONTESPAN
at opposite doors.*

Lau. Ha! my fair friend, well met!—how fares
Athenè?

Mme. de Mon. Weary with too much gaiety! Now,
tell me,

Do you ne'er tire of splendour? Does this round
Of gaudy pomps—this glare of glitt'ring nothings—
Does it ne'er pall upon you? To my eyes
'Tis as the earth would be if turf'd with scarlet,
Without one spot of green.

Lau. We all feel thus
Until we are used to it. Art has grown *my* nature.
And if I see green fields, or ill-dressed people,
I cry "How artificial!" With me, "*Nature*"
Is "Paris and Versailles." The word, "*a man*,"
Means something noble, that one sees at court.
Woman's the thing Heaven made for wearing trinkets
And talking scandal. That's my state of nature!
You'll like it soon; you have that temper which
Makes courts its element.

Mme. de Mon. And how?—define, sir.

Lau. First, then—but shall I not offend?

Mme. de Mon. Be candid.
I'd know my faults, to make them look like virtues.
Lau. First, then, Athenè, you've an outward frankness.
Deceit in you looks honester than truth.
Thoughts, at court, like faces on the stage,
Require some rouge. You rouge your thoughts so well,
That one would deem their only fault, that nature
Gave them too bright a bloom!

Mme. de Mon. Proceed!

Lau. Your wit
Is of the true court breed—it plays with nothings;

Just bright enough to warm, but never burn—
Excites the dull, but ne'er offends the vain.
You have much energy ; it looks like feeling !
Your cold ambition seems an easy impulse ;
Your head most ably counterfeits the heart,
But never, like the heart, betrays itself !
Oh ! you'll succeed at court !—you see I know you !
Not so this new-made duchess—young La Vallière.

Mme. de Mon. The weak, fond fool !

Lau. Yes, weak—*she* has a heart ;

Yet *you*, too, love the king !

Mme. de Mon. And she does *not* !

She loves but *Louis*—I but love the *king* :
Pomp, riches, state, and power—these, who would love
not ?

Lau. Bravo ! well said !—Oh, you'll succeed at court !
I knew it well ! it was for this I chose you—
Induced your sapient lord to waste no more
Your beauty in the shade—for this prepared
The duchess to receive you to her bosom,
Her dearest friend ; for this have duly fed
The king's ear with your praise, and clear'd your way
To rule a sovereign and to share a throne.

Mme. de Mon. I know thou hast been my architect of
power ;

And, when the pile is built—

Lau. [*with a smile*]. Could still o'erthrow it,

If thou couldst play the ingrate !

Mme. de Mon. I !—nay !

Lau.

Hear me

Each must have need of each. Long live the king !
Still let his temples ache beneath the crown.
But all that kings can give—wealth, rank, and power—
Must be for *us*—the king's friend and his favourite.

Mme. de Mon. But is it easy to supplant the duchess ?
All love La Vallière ! Her meek nature shrinks
Ev'n from our homage ; and she wears her state
As if she pray'd the world to pardon greatness.

Lau. And thus destroys herself ! At court, *Athenè*,
Vice, to win followers, takes the front of virtue,
And looks the dull plebeian things called *moral*
To scorn, until they blush to be unlike her.

Why is De Lauzun not her friend? Why plotting
 For a new rival? Why?—Because De Lauzun
 Wins not the power he look'd for from her friendship!
 She keeps not old friends!—and she makes no new ones!
 For who would be a friend to one who deems it
 A crime to ask his Majesty a favour?

"*Friends*" is a phrase at court that means *Promotion*!

Mme. de Mon. Her folly, I confess, would not be mine.
 But, grant her faults—the king still loves the duchess!

Lau. Since none are by, I'll venture on a treason,
 And say, the king's a man!—and men will change!
 I have his ear, and you shall win his eye.
 'Gainst a new face, and an experienced courtier,
 What chance hath this poor, loving, simple woman?
 Besides, she has too much conscience for a king!
 He likes not to look up, and feel how low,
 Ev'n on the throne that overlooks the world,
 His royal greatness dwarfs beside that heart
 That never stoop'd to sin, save when it loved him!

Mme. de Mon. You're eloquent, my lord!

Lau. Ah! of such natures
 You and I know but little!—[*Aside.*] This must cease,
 Or I shall all disclose my real aims!

[*Aloud.*] The king is with the duchess?

Mme. de Mon.

Yes.

Lau.

As yet

She doth suspect you not?

Mme. de Mon.

Suspect!—the puppet!

No; but full oft, her head upon my bosom,
 Calls me her truest friend!—invites me ever
 To amuse the king with my enlivening sallies,—
 And still breaks off, in sighing o'er the past,
 To wish her spirit were as blithe as mine,
 And fears her Louis wearies of her sadness.

Lau. So, the plot ripens!—ere the king came hither,
 I had prepared his royal pride to chafe
 At that sad face, whose honest sorrow wears
 Reproach unconsciously! You'll learn the issue!
 Now, then, farewell!—We understand each other!

[*Exit LAUZUN.*]

Mme. de Mon. And once I loved this man!—and still
 might love him,

But that I love ambition! Yes, my steps
 Now need a guide; but once upon the height,
 And I will have no partner! Thou, lord duke,
 With all thine insolent air of proud protection,
 Thou shalt wait trembling on my nod, and bind
 Thy fortune to my wheels! O man!—vain man!
 Well sung the poet,—when this power of beauty
 Heaven gave our sex, it gave the only sceptre
 Which makes the world a slave! And I will wield it!
 [*Exit* MME. DE MONTESPAN.]

SCENE II.

The scene opens and discovers the King, and the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE at chess.

Louis. But one move more!

Duch. de la Vall. Not so! I check the king.

Louis. A vain attempt!—the king is too well guarded!
 There,—check again! Your game is lost!

Duch. de la Vall. As usual,
 Ev'n from this mimic stage of war you rise
 Ever the victor.

[*They leave the table and advance.*]

Louis. 'Twere a fairer fortune,
 My own Louise, to reconcile the vanquish'd!

Duch. de la Vall. [*sadly*]. My best-loved Louis!

Louis. Why so sad a tone?
 Nay, smile, Louise!—Love thinks himself aggrieved
 If Care casts shadows o'er the heart it seeks
 To fill with cloudless sunshine! Smile, Louise!
 Ev'n unkind words were kinder than sad looks.
 There—now thou gladd'st me!

Duch. de la Vall. Yet ev'n thou, methought,
 Didst wear, this morn, a brow on which the light
 Shone less serenely than its wont!

Louis. This morn!
 Ay, it is true!—This morn I heard that France
 Hath lost a subject monarchs well might mourn!
 Oh! little know the world how much a king,

Whose life is past in *purchasing* devotion,
 Loses in one who merited all favour
 And scorn to ask the least! A king, Louise,
 Sees but the lackeys of mankind. The true
 Lords of our race—the high chivalric hearts—
 Nature's nobility—alas, are proud,
 And stand aloof, lest slaves should say they flatter!
 Of such a mould was he whom France deplores.

Duch. de la Vall. Tell me his name, that I, with thee,
 may mourn him.

Louis. A noble name, but a more noble bearer;
 Not to be made by, but to make, a lineage.
 Once, too, at Dunkirk, 'twixt me and the foe,
 He thrust his gallant breast, already seamed
 With warrior-wounds, and *his* blood flow'd for mine.
 Dead!—his just merits all unrecompensed!—
 Obscured, like sun-light, by the suppliant clouds!
 He should have died a marshal! Death did wrong
 To strike so soon! Alas, brave Bragelone!

Duch. de la Vall. Ha!—did I hear aright, my liege—
 my Louis?

That name—that name!—thou saidst not “Bragelone”?

Louis. Such was his name, not often heard at court.
 Thou didst not know him? What! thou art pale! thou
 weepest!—

Thou art ill! Louise, look up! .

[*He leads her to a seat.*]

Duch. de la Vall.

Be still, O Conscience!

I did not slay him!—Died *too soon*! Alas!
 He should have died with all his hopes unblighted,
 Ere I was—what I am!

Louis.

What mean these words?

Duch. de la Vall. How did death strike him?—what
 disease?

Louis.

I know not.

He had retired from service; and in peace
 Breathed out his soul to some remoter sky!
 France only guards his fame! What was he to thee
 That thou shouldst weep for him?

Duch. de la Vall.

Hast thou ne'er heard

We were betrothed in youth?

Louis [*agitated and aside*]. Lauzun speaks truth!

I'd not her virgin heart—she loved another!

[*Aloud.*] Betrothed! You mourn him deeply!

Duch. de la Vall.

Sire, I do.

That broken heart!—I was its dream—its idol!

And with regret is mingled—what repentance?

Louis [*coldly*]. Repentance, madam! Well, the word is gracious!

Duch. de la Vall. Pardon! oh, pardon! But the blow was sudden;

How can the heart play courtier with remorse?

Louis. Remorse!—again. Why be at once all honest,

And say you love me not!

Duch. de la Vall.

Not love you, Louis?

Louis. Not if you feel repentance to have loved!

Duch. de la Vall. What! think'st thou, Louis, I should love thee more

Did I love virtue less, or less regret it?

Louis. I pray you truce with these heroic speeches;

They please us in romance—in life they weary.

Duch. de la Vall. Louis, do I deserve this?

Louis.

Rather, lady,

Do I deserve the mute reproach of sorrow?

Still less these constant, never-soothed complaints—

This waiting-woman jargon of "*lost virtue*."

Duch. de la Vall. Sire, this from you!

Louis.

Why, oft, could others hear thee,

Well might they deem thee some poor village Phœbe,

Whom her false Lubin had deceived, and left,

Robb'd of her only dower! and not the great

Duchess la Vallière, in our realm of France

Second to none but our anointed race,

The envy of the beauty and the birth

Of Europe's court—our city of the world:

Is it so great disgrace, Louise la Vallière,

To wear, unrivall'd, in thy breast, the heart

Of Bourbon's latest, nor her least, of kings?

Duch. de la Vall. Sire, when you deigned to love me, I had hoped

You knew the sunshine of your royal favour

Had fallen on a lowly flower. Let others

Deem that the splendour consecrates the sin!

I'd loved thee with as pure and proud a love,

If thou hadst been the poorest cavalier
That ever served a king—thou know'st it, Louis!

Louis. I would not have it so! my fame, my glory,
The purple and the orb, are part of me;
And thou shouldst love them for my sake, and feel
I were not Louis were I less the king.
Still weeping! Fie! I tell thee tears freeze back
The very love I still would bear to thee!

Duch. de la Vall. "Would *still*!"—didst thou say
"still?"

Louis.

Come, lady!

Woman, to keep her empire o'er the heart,
Must learn its nature—mould unto its bias—
And rule by never differing from our humours.

Duch. de la Vall. I'll school my features, teach my lips
to smile,

Be all thou wilt; but say not "*still*," dear Louis!

Louis. Well, well! no further words; let peace be
with us.

[*Aside.*] By Heaven, she weeps with yet intenser passion!
It must be that she loved this Bragelone,
And mourns the loftier fate that made her mine!

[*Aloud.*] This gallant soldier, madam, your betrothed,
Hath some share in your tears?

Duch. de la Vall.

Oh, name him not;

My tears are all unworthy dew to fall
Upon a tomb so honour'd!

Louis.

Grant me patience!

These scenes are very tedious, fair La Vallière.
In truth, we kings have, in the council-chamber,
Enough to make us tearful;—in the bower
We would have livelier subjects to divert us.

Duch. de la Vall. Again forgive me! I am sick at heart;
I pray you pardon;—these sad news have marr'd
The music of your presence, and have made me
Fit but for solitude. I pray you, sire,
Let me retire; and when again I greet you,
I'll wear the mien you'd have me!

Louis.

Be it so!

Let me no more disturb you from your thoughts;
They must be sad. So brave—and your betroth'd!
Your grief becomes you.

Duch. de la Vall. You forgive me, Louis?
We do not part unkindly?

Louis.

Fair one, no!

[*Exit LA VALLIÈRE.*]

Louis. She was my first love, and my fondest.—*Was!*
Alas, the word must come!—I love her yet,
But love wanes glimmering to that twilight—friendship!
Grant that she never loved this Bragelone;
Still, tears and sighs make up dull interludes
In passion's short-lived drama! She is good,
Gentle, and meek,—and I do think she loves me,
(A truth no king is sure of!)—But, in fine,
I have begun to feel the hours are long
Pass'd in her presence! what I hotly sought,
Coldly I weary of. I'll seek De Lanzun:
I like his wit—I almost like his knavery;
It never makes us yawn, like high-flown virtues.
Thirst, hunger, rest—these are the wants of peasants:
A courtier's wants are titles, place, and gold;
But a poor king, who has these wants so sated,
Has only one want left—to be amused!

[*Exit LOUIS.*]

SCENE III.

Re-enter the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Duch. de la Vall. Louis! dear Louis!—Gone! alas! and
left me
Half in displeasure!—I was wrong, methinks,
To—no!—I was not wrong to *feel* remorse,
But wrong to give it utterance!

Enter MADAME DE MONTESPAN.

Mme. de Mon. What! alone,
Fair friend? I thought the king——

Duch. de la Vall. Has gone, in anger;
Cold, and in anger.

Mme. de Mon. What, with *thee*, dear lady?
On the smooth surface of that angel meekness

I should have thought no angry breath could linger.
But men and kings are——

Duch. de la Vall.

Hush! I was to blame.

The king's all goodness. Shall I write to him?

Letters have not our looks—and, oh, one look!

How many hardest hearts one look hath won,

A life consumed in words had woo'd in vain!

Mme. de Mon. To-night there is high revel at the
court;

There you may meet your truant king.

Duch. de la Vall.

To-night!

An age!—How many hours to night?

Mme. de Mon.

You know

My office makes my home the royal palace;

I serve the queen, and thus shall see your Louis

Ere the sun set.

Duch. de la Vall. You!—happy you!

Mme. de Mon.

Perchance

(The king is ever gracious to your friends,

And knows me of the nearest), I might whisper,

Though with less sweet a tone, your message to him,

And be your dove, and bear you back the olive?

Duch. de la Vall. My kind Athenè!

Mme. de Mon.

Nay, 'tis yours the kindness,

To wear my love so near your heart. But, tell me,

Since you accept my heraldry, the cause

Of strife between you in this court of love.

Duch. de la Vall. Alas! I know not, save that I offended!

The wherefore boots the heart that loves to know?

Mme. de Mon. Not much, I own, the poor defendant—
woman,

But much the advocate; I need the brief.

Duch. de la Vall. Methinks his kingly nature chafes to
see

It cannot rule the conscience as the heart;

But, tell him, ever henceforth I will keep

Sad thoughts for lonely hours.—Athenè, tell him,

That if he smile once more upon Louise,

The smile shall never pass from that it shines on;

Say—but I'll write myself.

[Sits down to the table and writes.

Mme. de Mon. [aside].

What need of schemes—

Lauzun's keen wit—Athenè's plotting spirit?
She weaves herself the web that shall ensnare her!

Duch. de la Vall. There; back these feeble words with all
thy beauty,

Thy conquering eyes, and thy bewitching smile.
Sure never suit can fail with such a pleader!
And now a little while to holier sadness,
And thine accusing memory, Bragelone!

Mme. de Mon. Whom speak you of?—the hero of the
Fronde?

Who seem'd the last of the old Norman race,
And half preserved to this degenerate age
The lordly shape the ancient Bayards wore!

Duch. de la Vall. You praise him well! He was my
father's friend,

And should have been his son. We were affianced,
And—but no more! Ah! cruel, cruel Louis!

You mourn'd for him—how much more cause have I!

Mme. de Mon. [*quickly*]. What! he is dead? your grief
the king resented?

Knew he your troth had thus been plighted?

Duch. de la Vall.

Yes:

And still he seem'd to deem it sin to mourn him!

Mme. de Mon. [*aside*]. A clue—another clue—that I will
follow,

Until it lead me to the throne!—[*Aloud.*] Well, cheer
thee;

Trust your true friend; rely on my persuasion.

Methinks I never task'd its powers till now.

Farewell, and fear not! Oh! I'll plead your cause,

As if myself the client!—[*Aside.*] Thou art sentenced!

[*Exit MADAME DE MONTESPAN.*]

Duch. de la Vall. 'Tis a sweet solace still to have a
friend—

A friend in woman! Oh, to what a reed

We bind our destinies, when man we love!

Peace, honour, conscience lost—if I lose him,

What have I left? How sinks my heart within me!

I'll to my chamber; there the day of tears

Lends night its smile! And I'm the thing they envy!

[*Exit DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.*]

SCENE IV.

The Gardens of Versailles—LAUZUN, GRAMMONT, and Courtiers.

Lau. 'Tis now the hour in which our royal master
Honours the ground of his rejoicing gardens
By his illustrious footsteps!—there, my lords,
That is the true style-courtier!

Gram. Out upon you!
Your phrase would suit some little German prince,
Of fifteen hundred quarterings and five acres,
And not the world's great Louis! 'Tis the hour
When Phœbus shrinks abash'd, and all the stars
Envy the day that it beholds the king!

Enter LOUIS.

Louis. My lords,
Pray you be cover'd. Hark ye, dear De Lauzun.
[*Exeunt the Courtiers, as the King takes LAUZUN aside.*
The fair De Montespan?

Lau. Is worth the loving;
And, by mine honour, while we speak she comes!
A happy fortune. Sire, may I withdraw? [*Exit.*

*Enter MADAME DE MONTESPAN. [Salutes the King
and passes on.]*

Louis. Fair madam, we had hoped you with you brought
Some bright excuse to grace our cheerless presence
With a less short-lived light! You dawn upon us
Only to make us more regret your setting.

Mme. de Mon. Sire, if I dared, I would most gladly hail
A few short moments to arrest your presence,
And rid me of a soft, yet painful duty.

Louis. 'Tis the first time, be sure, so sweet a voice
E'er craved a sanction for delighting silence.
Speak on, we pray thee!

Mme. de Mon. Gracious sire, the duchess,
Whom you have lately left, she fears, in anger,
Besought me to present this letter to you.

Louis [*takes the letter, and aside*]. She blushes while she
speaks!—'Tis passing strange,

I ne'er remark'd those darkly-dreaming eyes,
That melt in their own light!

[Reads, and carelessly puts up the letter.

It scarcely suits

Her dignity, and ours, to choose a witness
To what hath chanced between us. She is good;
But her youth, spent in some old country castle,
Knows not the delicate spirit of a court.

Mme. de Mon. She bade me back her suit. Alas! my
liege,

Who can succeed, if fair La Vallière fail?

Louis. She bade thee?—she was prudent! Were I
woman,

And loved, I'd not have chosen such a herald.

Mme. de Mon. Love varies in its colours with all tem-
pers;

The duchess is too proud to fear a rival,
Too beautiful to find one. May I take
Some word of comfort back to cheer her sadness,
Made doubly deep by thoughts of your displeasure,
And grief for a dear friend?

Louis. Ay, *that's* the sadness!

Mme. de Mon. He was a gallant lord, this Bragelone,
And her betrothed. Perchance in youth she loved him,
Ere the great sun had quench'd the morning star!

Louis. She loved him!—think'st thou so?

Mme. de Mon. Indeed I know not;

But I have heard her eloquent in praise,
And seen her lost in woe. You will forgive her!

Louis. Forgive her?—there's no cause!

Mme. de Mon. Now, bless you, sire,
For that one word. My task is done.

Louis. Already?

Mme. de Mon. What can I more? Oh, let me hasten back!
What rapture must be hers who can but fill
An atom of the heart of godlike Louis!
How much more the whole soul!—To lose thy love
Must be, not grief, but some sublime despair,
Like that the Roman felt who lost a world!

Louis [aside]. By Heaven, she fires me!—a brave, royal
spirit,
Worthy to love a king!

Mme. de Mon. To know thee hers,
 What pride!—what glory! Though all earth cried
 “Shame!”

Earth could not still the trumpet at her heart,
 That, with its swelling and exultant voice,
 Told her the earth was but the slave of Louis,
 And *she* the partner! And, O hour of dread!
 When (for the hour must come) some fairer form
 Shall win thee from her—still, methinks, 'twould be
 A boast to far posterity to point
 To all the trophies piled about thy throne,
 And say—“He loved me once!”—O sire, your pardon;
 I am too bold.

Louis. Why, this were love, indeed,
 Could we but hope to win it. And such love
 Would weave the laurel in its wreaths of myrtle.
 Beautiful lady! while thou speak'st, I dream
 What love should be,—and feel where love is not!
 Thou com'st the suitor, to remain the judge;
 And I could kneel to thee for hope and mercy.

Mme. de Mon. Ah, no!—ah, no!—she is my friend.

And if

She love not as I love—I mean, I *might* love—
 Still she *believes* she loves thee. Tempt me not.
 Who could resist thee! Sire, farewell!

[*Exit MADAME DE MONTESPAN.*

Louis.

Her voice

Is hush'd; but still its queen-like music lingers
 In my rapt ears. I dreamt Louise had loved me;
 She who felt love disgrace! Before the true,
 How the tame counterfeit grows pale and lifeless.
 By the sad brow of yon devout La Vallière
 I feel a man, and fear myself a culprit!
 But this high spirit wakes in mine the sense
 Of what it is—I *am* that Louis whom
 The world has called “The Great!”—and in her pride
 Mirror mine own. This jaded life assumes
 The zest, the youth, the glory of *excitement*!
 To-night we meet again;—speed fast, dull hours!

[*Exit LOUIS.*

SCENE V.

Grand Saloon in the Palace of Versailles—in the background the suite of apartments is seen in perspective—Courtiers, Ladies, &c.

First Cour. [*approaching the Duch. de la Vall.*]. Madam,
 your goodness is to France a proverb !
 If I might dare request, this slight memorial
 You would convey to our most gracious master ?
 The rank of colonel in the royal guard
 Is just now vacant. True, I have not served ;
 But I do trust my valour is well-known :
 I've kill'd three noted swordsmen in a duel !—
 And, for the rest, a word from you were more
 Than all the laurels Holland gave to others.

Duch. de la Vall. My lord, forgive me ! I might ill
 deserve
 The friendship of a monarch, if, forgetting
 That honours are the attributes of merit ;—
 And they who sell the service of the public
 For the false coin, soft smiles and honey'd words
 Forged in the antechambers of a palace,
 Defraud a people to degrade a king !
 If you have merits, let *them* plead for you ;
 Nor ask in whispers what you claim from justice.

Mme. de Mon. [*to first Courtier, as the Duch. de la Vall.
 turns away*]. Give me the paper. Hush ! the king
 shall see it !

[*Music.*

*Enter the KING, GRAMMONT, and other Courtiers. He
 pauses by the QUEEN, and accosts her respectfully
 in dumb show.*

Gram. [*aside.*] With what a stately and sublime decorum

His majesty throws grandeur o'er his foibles !
 He not disguises vice ; but makes vice kingly—
 Most gorgeous of all sensualists !

Lau.

How different

His royal rival in the chase of pleasure,
 The spendthrift, sauntering Second Charles of England !

Gram. Ay, Jove to Comus!

Lau. Silence! Jove approaches!

[The crowd breaks up into groups; the King passes slowly from each till he joins the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE; the Courtiers retire.]

Louis. Why, this is well. I thank you.

Duch. de la Vall.

And forgive me?

Louis. Forgive you! You mistake me: wounded feeling is not displeasure. Let this pass, Louise.

Your lovely friend has a most heavenly smile!

Duch. de la Vall. And a warm heart. In truth, my liege, I'm glad

You see her with my eyes.

Louis.

You have no friend

Whose face it glads me more to look upon.

[Aside, and gazing on MONTESPAN.]

(What thrilling eyes!)—[Aloud.] My thanks are due to her,

For, with the oil of her mellifluous voice,
Smoothing the waves the passing breeze had ruffled.

[Joins MADAME DE MONTESPAN, and leads her through the crowd to the back of the stage.]

Lau. Your grace resolves no more to be content
Eclipsing others. You eclipse yourself.

Duch. de la Vall. I thought you were a friend, and not
a flatterer.

Lau. Friendship would lose its dearest privilege
If friendship were forbidden to admire!

Why, ev'n the king admires your grace's friend,—

Told me to-day she was the loveliest lady

The court could boast. Nay, see how, while they speak,

He gazes on her. How his breathing fans

The locks that shade the roses of her cheek!

Duch. de la Vall. Ha! Nay, be still, my heart.

Lau.

It is but friendship;

But it looks wondrous warm!

Duch. de la Vall.

He cannot mean it!

And yet—and yet—he lingers on her hand—
He whispers!

Lau.

How the gossips gaze and smile!

There'll be much scandal.

Duch. de la Vall. Lauzun!—what!—thou think'st not—

No, no, thou canst not think——

Lau. That courts know treachery,
That women are ambitious, or men false;
I will not think it. Pshaw!

Duch. de la Vall. My brain swims round!
Louis, of late, hath been so changed. How fair
She looks to-night!—and, oh, *she* has not fallen!
He comes—he nears us—he has left her. Fie!
My foolish fancies wronged him!

Lau. The spell works.

Mme. de Mon. [*as the king quits her, to First Courtier,*
giving him back the paper]. My lord, your suit is
granted.

First Cour. Blessings, madam!

[*The other Courtiers come round him.*]

Second Cour. Her influence must be great. I know three
dukes

Most pressing for the post.

Third Cour. A rising sun,
Worthier of worship than that cold La Vallière.
The king as well, methinks, might have no mistress,
As one by whom no courtier grew the richer.

[*The Courtiers group round MADAME DE MONTESPAN.*]

Louis. My lords, you do remember the bright lists
Which, in the place termed thenceforth "*The Carrousel*,"*
We sometime held?—a knightly tournament,
That brought us back the age of the first Francis!

Lau. Of all your glorious festivals, the greatest!
Who but remembers?

Duch. de la Vall. [*Aside*]. Then he wore my colours.
How kind to bring back to my yearning heart
That golden spring-time of our early loves!

Louis. Next week we will revive the heroic pageant.
Proud plumes shall wave, and levell'd spears be shiver'd;
Ourself will take the lists, and do defy
The chivalry of our renowned France,

* The *Place du Carrousel* was so named from a splendid festival given by Louis. On the second day, devoted to knightly games, the king, who appeared in the character of *Roger*, carried off four prizes. All the crown jewels were prodigalized on his arms and the trappings of his horse.

In honour of that lady of our court
 For whom we wear the colours, and the motto
 Which suits her best—" *Most bright where all are bril-
 liant !* "

Gram. Oh, a most kingly notion !

Louis.

Ere we part,

Let each knight choose his colours and his lady.

Ourselves have set the example.

[*The Courtiers mingle with the Ladies, &c., many
 Ladies give their colours.*]

Duch. de la Vall. [*timidly*]. Oh, my Louis !

I read thy heart ; thou hast chosen this device
 To learn thy poor Vallière to be proud.

Nay, turn not from my blessings. Once before

You wore my colours, though I gave them not.

To-night I give them !—Louis loves me still !

[*Takes one of the knots from her breast, and pre-
 sents it.*]

Louis. Lady, the noblest hearts in France would beat

More high beneath your badge. Alas ! my service

Is vow'd already here.

[*Turning to MADAME DE MONTESPAN, and placing
 a knot of her colours over his order of the Saint
 Esprit.*]

These are my colours !

Duch. de la Vall.

How ! How !

[*The King converses apart with MADAME DE
 MONTESPAN.*]

Lau. [*to the Duch. de la Vall.*] Be calm, your grace ; a
 thousand eyes

Are on you. Give the envious crowd no triumph.

Ah ! had my fortune won so soft a heart

I would have——

Duch. de la Vall. Peace ?—Away ! Betray'd ! — Un-
 done !

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

*The Gardens at Versailles.**Enter LAUZUN.*

Lau. So far, so prosperous! From the breast of Louis,
The blooming love it bore so long a summer
Falls like a fruit o'er-ripe; and, in the court,
And o'er the king, this glittering Montespan
Queens it without a rival,—awes all foes,
And therefore makes all friends. State, office, honours,
Reflect her smile, or fade before her frown.
So far, so well! Enough for Montespan.
For Lauzun now!—I love this fair La Vallière,
As well, at least, as woman's worth the loving;
And if the jewel has one trifling flaw,
The gold 'tis set in will redeem the blemish.
The king's no niggard lover; and her wealth
Is vast. I have the total in my tablets—
(Besides estates in Picardy and Provence.)
I'm very poor—my debtors very pressing.
I've robb'd the duchess of a faithless lover,
To give myself a wife, and her a husband.
Wedlock's a holy thing,—and wealth a good one!

Enter LOUIS.

Louis. The day is long—I have not seen Athenè.
Pleasure is never stagnant in her presence;
But every breeze of woman's changeful skies
Ripples the stream, and freshens e'en the sunshine.

Lau. 'Tis said, your Majesty, "that contrast's sweet,"
And she you speak of well contrasts another.
Whom once——

Louis. I loved; and still devoutly honour.
This poor La Vallière!—could we will affection,
It would have never changed. And even now
I feel Athenè has but charm'd my senses,
And my void heart still murmurs for Louise!

I would we could be friends, since now not lovers,
Nor dare be happy while I know her wretched.

Lau. Wearies she still your Majesty with prayers,
Tender laments, and passionate reproaches?

Louis. Her love outlives its hopes.

Lau. An irksome task
To witness tears we cannot kiss away,
And with cold friendship freeze the ears of love!

Louis. Most irksome and most bootless!

Lau. Haply, sire,
In one so pure, the charm of wedded life
Might lull keen griefs to rest, and curb the love
Thou fliest from to the friendship that thou seekest?

Louis. I've thought of this. The Duke de Longueville
loves her,
And hath besought before her feet to lay
His princely fortunes.

Lau. [*quickly*]. Ha!—and she—

Louis. Rejects him.

Lau. Sire, if love's sun, once set, bequeaths a twilight,
'Twould only hover o'er some form whom chance
Had link'd with Louis—some one (though unworthy)
Whose presence took a charm from brighter thoughts
That knit it with the past.

Louis. Why, how now, duke!—
Thou speak'st not of thyself?

Lau. I dare not, sire!

Louis. Ha, ha!—poor Lauzun!—what! the soft La
Vallièrè

Transfer her sorrowing heart to thee! Ha, ha!

Lau. My name is not less noble than De Longueville's;
My glory greater, since the world has said
Louis esteems me more.

Louis. Esteems! No;—favours!
And thou dost think that she, who shrunk from love,
Lest love were vice, would wed the wildest lord
That ever laugh'd at virtue?

Lau. Sire, you wrong me,
Or else you (pardon me) condemn yourself.
Is it too much for one the king calls friend
To aspire to one the king has call'd—

Louis. Sir, hold!
I never so malign'd that hapless lady

As to give *her* the title only due
 To such as Montespán, who glories in it—
 The *last* my *mistress*; but the first my *victim*:
 A nice distinction, taught not in your logic,
 Which, but just now, confused esteem and favour.
 Go to! we kings are not the dupes you deem us.

Lau. [*aside*]. So high! I'll win La Vallière to avenge me,
 And humble this imperial vanity.

[*Aloud.*] Sire, I offend! Permit me to retire,
 And mourn your anger; nor presume to guess
 Whence came the cause. And, since it seems your *favour*
 Made me aspire too high, in that I loved
 Where you, sire, made love noble, and half-dream'd
 Might be—nay, am not—wholly there disdain'd—

Louis. How, duke?

Lau. I do renounce at once
 The haughty vision. Sire, permit my absence.

Louis. Lauzun, thou hintest that, were suit allow'd thee,
 La Vallière might not scorn it;—is it so?

Lau. I crave your pardon, sire.

Louis. Must I ask twice?

Lau. I do believe, then, sire, with time and patience,
 The duchess might be won to—not reject me!

Louis. Go, then, and prove thy fortune. We permit
 thee.

And, if thou prosperest, why then love's a riddle,
 And woman is—no matter! Go, my lord!
 We did not mean to wound thee. So, forget it!

Woo when thou wilt—and wear what thou can'st win.

Lau. My gracious liege, Lauzun commends him to thee;
 And if one word, he merit not, may wound him,
 He'll think of favours words can never cancel.
 Memory shall med'cine to his present pain.
 God save you, sire!—[*Aside*] to be the dupe I deem you!

[*Exit LAUZUN.*]

Louis. I love her not; and yet, methinks, am jealous!
 Lauzun is wise and witty—knows the sex;
 What if she do?—No! I will not believe it.
 And what is she to me?—a friend—a friend!
 And I would have her wed. 'Twere best for both—
 A balm for conscience—an excuse for change!
 'Twere best:—I marvel much if she'll accept him!

[*Exit LOUIS.*]

SCENE II.

A Private Apartment in the Palace of the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Enter the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Duch. de la Vall. He loves me, then, no longer! All the words
Earth knows shape but one thought — "He loves no longer!"

Where shall I turn? My mother—my poor mother!
Sleeps the long sleep! 'Tis better so! Her life
Ran to its lees. I will not mourn for her.
But it is hard to be alone on earth!
This love, for which I gave so much, is dead,
Save in my heart; and love, surviving love,
Changes its nature, and becomes despair!
Ah, me!—ah, me! how hateful is this world!

Enter Gentleman of the Chamber.

Gent. The Duke de Lauzun!

Duch. de la Vall. News, sweet news, of Louis!

Enter LAUZUN.

Lau. Dare I disturb your thoughts?

Duch. de la Vall. My lord, you're welcome!
Came you from court to-day?

Lau. I left the king

But just now, in the gardens.

Duch. de la Vall. [eagerly]. Well!

Lau. He bore him

With his accustom'd health!

Duch. de la Vall. Proceed.

Lau. Dear lady,

I have no more to tell.

Duch. de la Vall. [aside]. Alas! No message!

Lau. We did converse, 'tis true, upon a subject
Most dear to one of us. Your grace divines it?

Duch. de la Vall. [joyfully]. Was it of me he spoke?

Lau.

I spoke, and he replied. I praised your beauty—

Duch. de la Vall. You praised!

Lau. Your form, your face—that wealth of mind
Which, play'd you not the miser, and conceal'd it,
Would buy up all the coins that pass for wit.
The king, assenting, wish'd he might behold you
As happy—as your virtues should have made you.

Duch. de la Vall. 'Twas said in mockery!

Lau. Lady, no!—in kindness.
Nay, more (he added), would you yet your will
Mould to his wish—

Duch. de la Vall. His wish!—the lightest!

Lau. Ah!
You know not how my heart throbs while you speak!
Be not so rash to promise; or, at least,
Be faithful to perform!

Duch. de la Vall. You speak in riddles.

Lau. Of your lone state and beautiful affections,
Form'd to make Home an Eden, our good king,
Tenderly mindful, fain would see you link
Your lot to one whose love might be your shelter.
He spake, and all my long-conceal'd emotions
Gush'd into words, and I confess'd—O lady,
Hear me confess once more—how well I love thee!

Duch. de la Vall. You dared?—and he—the king—

Lau. Upon me smiled,
And bade me prosper.

Duch. de la Vall. Ah!

[Sinks down and covers her face with her hands.]

Lau. Nay, nay, look up!
The heart that could forsake a love like thine
Doth not deserve regret. Look up, dear Lady!

Duch. de la Vall. He bade thee prosper!

Lau. Pardon! My wild hope
Outran discretion.

Duch. de la Vall. Louis bade thee prosper!

Lau. Ah, if this thankless—this remorseless love
Thou could'st forget! Oh, give me but thy friendship,
And take respect, faith, worship, all, in Lanzun!

Duch. de la Vall. Consign me to another! Well, 'tis
well!

Earth's latest tie is broke!—earth's hopes are over!

Lau. Speak to me, sweet Louise!

Duch. de la Vall. So, thou art he

To whom this shatter'd heart should be surrender'd?—
 And thou, the high-born, glittering, scornful Lauzun,
 Wouldst take the cast-off leman of a king,
 Nor think thyself disgraced! Fie!—fie! thou'rt shame-
 less!

Lau. You were betray'd by love, and not by sin,
 Nor low ambition. Your disgrace is honour
 By the false side of dames the world calls spotless.

Duch. de la Vall. Go, sir, nor make me scorn you. If
 I've err'd,

I know, at least, the majesty of virtue,
 And feel—what you forget.

Lau. Yet hear me, madam!

Duch. de la Vall. Go, go! You are the king's friend—
 you were mine;

I would not have you thus debased—refused
 By one at once the fallen and forsaken!

His friend shall not be shamed so!

[*Exit the DUCH. DE LA VALLIÈRE.*]

Lau. [*passing his hand over his eyes*]. I do swear
 These eyes are moist! And he who own'd this gem
 Casts it away, and cries "divine" to tinsel!
 So falls my hope. My fortunes call me back
 To surer schemes. Before that ray of goodness
 How many plots shrunk, blinded, into shadow!
 Lauzun forgot himself, and dreamt of virtue!

[*Exit LAUZUN.*]

SCENE III.

Gentleman of the Chamber, and BRAGELONE, as a
Franciscan friar.

Gent. The duchess gone! I fear me that, to-day,
 You are too late for audience, reverend father.

Brage. Audience!—a royal phrase!—it suits the
 duchess.

Go, son; announce me.

Gent. By what name, my father?

Brage. I've done with names. Announce a nameless monk,

Whose prayers have risen o'er some graves she honours.

Gent. [aside]. My lady is too lavish of her bounty
To these proud shavelings: yet, methinks, this friar
Hath less of priest than warrior in his bearing.
He awes me with his stern and thrilling voice,
His stately gesture, and imperious eye.
And yet, I swear, he comes for alms!—the varlet!
Why should I heed him?

Brage.

Didst thou hear? Begone!

[*Exit* Gentleman.]

Yes, she will know me not. My lealest soldier,
One who had march'd, bare-breasted, on the steel,
If I had bid him cast away the treasure
Of the o'er-valued life; the nurse that rear'd me,
Or mine own mother, in these shroudlike robes,
And in the immature and rapid age
Which, from my numb'd and withering heart, hath crept
Unto my features, now might gaze upon me,
And pass the stranger by. Why should she know me,
If they who loved me know not? Hark! I hear her:
That silver footfall!—still it hath to me
Its own peculiar and most spiritual music,
Trembling along the pulses of the air,
And dying on the heart that makes its echo!
'Tis she! How lovely yet!

Enter the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE.

Duch. de la Vall.

Your blessing, father.

Brage. Let courts and courtiers bless the favour'd
duchess:

Courts bless the proud; Heaven's ministers, the humble.

Duch. de la Vall. He taunts me, this poor friar! Well,
my father,

I have obey'd your summons. Do you seek
Masses for souls departed?—or the debt
The wealthy owe the poor?—say on!

Brage. [aside].

Her heart

Is not yet harden'd! Daughter, such a mission
Were sweeter than the task which urged me hither:

You had a lover once—a plain, bold soldier;
He loved you well!

Duch. de la Vall. Ah, Heaven!

Brage.

And you forsook him.

Your choice was natural—some might call it noble!

And this blunt soldier pardon'd the *desertion*,

But sunk at what his folly term'd *dishonour*.

Duch. de la Vall. O father, spare me!—if dishonour
were,

It rested but with me.

Brage.

So deem'd the world,

But not that foolish soldier!—he had learn'd

To blend his thoughts, his fame, *himself*, with thee;

Thou wert a purer, a diviner self;

He loved thee as a warrior worships glory;

He loved thee as a Roman honour'd virtue;

He loved thee as thy sex adore ambition;

And when Pollution breathed upon his idol

It blasted glory, virtue, and ambition,

Fill'd up each crevice in the world of thought,

And poison'd earth with thy contagious shame!

Duch. de la Vall. Spare me! in mercy, spare me!

Brage.

This poor fool,

This shadow, living only on thy light,

When thou wert darken'd, could but choose to die.

He left the wars; no fame, since *thine* was dim:

He left his land;—what home without Louise?

It broke—that stubborn, stern, unbending heart—

It broke! and, breaking, its last sigh—forgave thee!

Duch. de la Vall. And I live on!

Brage.

One eve, methinks, he told me,

Thy hand around his hauberk wound a scarf;

And thy voice bade him "Wear it for the sake

Of one who honour'd worth!" Were those the words?

Duch. de la Vall. They were. Alas! alas!

Brage.

He wore it, lady,

Till memory ceased. It was to him the token

Of a sweet dream; and, from his quiet grave,

He sends it now to thee.—Its hues are faded.

Duch. de la Vall. Give it me!—let me bathe it with my
tears!

Memorial of my guilt—

Brage. [*in a soft and tender accent*]. And his forgiveness!

Duch. de la Vall. That tone! ha! while thou speakest, in thy voice,

And in thy presence, there is something kindred
To him we jointly mourn: thou art—

Brage. His brother:

Of whom, perchance, in ancient years he told thee;
Who, early wearied of this garish world,
Fled to the convent-shade, and found repose.

Duch. de la Vall. [*approaching*]. Ay, is it so?—thou'rt
Bragelone's brother?

Why, then, thou art what *he* would be, if living—
A friend to one most friendless!

Brage. Friendless—Ay,

Thou hast learnt, betimes, the truth, that man's wild
passion

Makes but its sport of virtue, peace, affection;
And breaks the plaything when the game is done!
Friendless!—I pity thee!

Duch. de la Vall. Oh! holy father,

Stay with me!—succour me!—reprove, but guide me:
Teach me to wean my thoughts from earth to heaven,
And be what God ordain'd his chosen priests—
Foes to our sin, but friends to our despair.

Brage. Daughter, a heavenly and a welcome duty,
But one most rigid and austere: there is
No composition with our debts of sin.
God claims thy soul; and, lo! his creature there!
Thy choice must be between them—God or man,
Virtue or guilt; a Louis or—

Duch. de la Vall.

A Louis!

Not mine the poor atonement of the choice;
I am, myself, the Abandon'd One!

Brage.

I know it;

Therefore my mission and my ministry.
When he who loved thee died, he bade me wait
The season when the sicklied blight of shame
Creeps o'er the bloom of Passion, when the way
Is half prepared by Sorrow to Repentance,
And seek you then,—*he* trusted not in vain:
Perchance an idle hope, but it consoled him.

Duch. de la Vall. No, no!—not idle!—in my happiest hours,

When the world smiled, a void was in this heart
The world could never fill: thy brother knew me!

Brage. I do believe thee, daughter. Hear me yet;
My mission is not ended. When thy mother
Lay on the bed of death (she went before
The sterner heart the same blow broke more slowly),—
As thus she lay, around the swimming walls
Her dim eyes wander'd, searching through the shadows,
As if the spirit, half-redeem'd from clay,
Could force its will to shape, and, from the darkness,
Body a daughter's image—(nay, be still!)
Thou wert not there;—alas! thy shame had murder'd
Even the blessed sadness of that duty!
But o'er that pillow watch'd a sleepless eye,
And by that couch moved one untiring step,
And o'er that suffering rose a ceaseless prayer;
And still thy mother's voice, whene'er it call'd
Upon a daughter—found a son!

Duch. de la Vall.

O Heaven!

Have mercy on me!

Brage.

Coldly through the lattice
Gleam'd the slow dawn, and, from their latest sleep,
Woke the sad eyes it was not *thine* to close!
And, as they fell upon the haggard brow,
And the thin hairs—grown grey, but not by Time—
Of that lone watcher—while upon her heart
Gush'd all the memories of the mighty wrecks
Thy guilt had made of what were once the shrines
For Honour, Peace, and God!—that aged woman
(She was a hero's wife) upraised her voice
To curse her child!

Duch. de la Vall. Go on!—be kind, and kill me!

Brage. Then he, whom thoughts of what he *was* to thee
Had made her son, arrested on her lips
The awful doom, and, from the earlier past,
Invoked a tenderer spell—a holier image!
Painted thy gentle, soft, obedient childhood—
Thy guileless youth, lone state, and strong temptation;
Thy very sin the overflow of thoughts
From wells whose source was innocence; and thus

Sought, with the sunshine of thy maiden spring,
To melt the ice that lay upon her heart,
Till all the mother flow'd again!

Duch. de la Vall. And she!

Brage. Spoke only once again! She died—and bless'd thee!

Duch. de la Vall. [*rushing out*]. No more!—I can no more!—my heart is breaking!

Brage. The angel hath not left her!—if the plumes
Have lost the whiteness of their younger glory,
The wings have still the instinct of the skies,
And yet shall bear her up!

Louis [*without*]. We need you not, sir;
Ourself will seek the duchess.

Brage. The king's voice!
How my flesh creeps!—my foe, and her destroyer!
The ruthless, heartless—

[*His hand seeks rapidly and mechanically for his sword-hilt.*]

Why, why!—where's my sword?
O Lord! I do forget myself to dotage:
The soldier, now, is a poor helpless monk,
That hath not even curses. Satan, hence!
Get thee behind me, Tempter!—There, I'm calm.

SCENE IV.

LOUIS and BRAGELONE.

Louis. I can no more hold parley with impatience,
But long to learn how Lauzun's courtship prospers.
She is not here. At prayers, perhaps. The duchess
Hath grown devout. A friar!—Save you, father!

Brage. I thank thee, son.

Louis. monk, He knows me not. Well,

Are you her grace's almoner?

Brage. Sire, no!

Louis. So short, yet know us?

Brage.

Sire, I do. You are

The man—

Louis. How, priest!—the man!

Brage.

The word offends you?

The king, who raised a maiden to a duchess.

That maiden's father was a gallant subject:

Kingly reward!—you made his daughter duchess.

That maiden's mother was a stainless matron:

Her heart you broke, though mother to a duchess!

That maiden was affianced from her youth

To one who served you well—nay, saved your life:

His life you robb'd of all that gave life value;

And yet—you made his fair betroth'd a duchess!

You are that king. The world proclaims you "Great;"

A million warriors bled to buy your laurels;

A million peasants starved to build Versailles:

Your people famish; but your court is splendid!

Priests from the pulpit bless your glorious reign;

Poets have sung you greater than Augustus;

And painters placed you on immortal canvas,

Limn'd as the Jove whose thunders awe the world:

But to the humble minister of Heaven,

You are the king who has betray'd his trust—

Beggar'd a nation but to bloat a court,

Seen in men's lives the pastime to ambition,

Look'd but on virtue as the toy for vice;

And, for the first time, from a subject's lips,

Now learns the name he leaves to Time and God!

Louis. Add to the bead-roll of that king's offences,

That when a foul-mouth'd monk assumed the rebel,

The monster-king forgave him. Hast thou done?

Brage. Your changing hues belie your royal mien;

Ill the high monarch veils the trembling man!

Louis. Well, you are privileged! It ne'er was said

The Fourteenth Louis, in his proudest hour,

Bow'd not his sceptre to the Church's crozier.

Brage. Alas! *the Church!* 'Tis true, this garb of serge

Dares speech that daunts the ermine, and walks free

Where stout hearts tremble in the triple mail.

But wherefore?—Lies the virtue in the robe,

Which the moth eats? or in these senseless beads?

Or in the name of Priest? The Pharisees

Had priests that gave their Saviour to the cross !
 No ! we have high immunity and sanction,
 That Truth may teach humanity to Power,
 Glide through the dungeon, pierce the armed throng,
 Awaken Luxury on her Sybarite couch,
 And, startling souls that slumber on a throne,
 Bow kings before that priest of priests—THE CONSCIENCE !

Louis [aside]. An awful man ! unlike the reverend crew
 Who praise my royal virtues in the pulpit,
 And—ask for bishoprics when church is over !

Brage. This makes us sacred. The profane are they
 Honouring the herald while they scorn the mission.
 The king who serves the Church, yet clings to Mammon ;
 Who fears the pastor, but forgets the flock ;
 Who bows before the monitor, and yet
 Will ne'er forego the sin, may sink, when age
 Palsies the lust and deadens the temptation,
 To the priest-ridden, not repentant, dotard,
 For pious hopes hail superstitious terrors,
 And seek some sleek Iscariot of the *Church*,
 To sell salvation for the thirty pieces !

Louis [aside]. He speaks as one inspired !

Brage.

Awake !—awake !

Great though thou art, awake thee from the dream
 That earth was made for kings—mankind for slaughter—
 Woman for lust—the people for the palace !
 Dark warnings have gone forth ; along the air
 Lingers the crash of the first Charles's throne !
 Behold the young, the fair, the haughty king !
 The kneeling courtiers, and the flattering priests ;
 Lo ! where the palace rose, behold the scaffold—
 The crowd—the axe—the headsman—and the victim !
 Lord of the silver lilies, canst thou tell
 If the same fate await not thy descendant !
 If some meek son of thine imperial line
 May make no brother to yon headless spectre !
 And when the sage who saddens o'er the end
 Tracks back the causes, tremble, lest he find
 The seeds, thy wars, thy pomp, and thy profusion
 Sow'd in a heartless court and breadless people,
 Grew to the tree from which men shaped the scaffold,—
 And the long glare of thy funereal glories

Light unborn monarchs to a ghastly grave!
 Beware, proud King! the Present cries aloud,
 A prophet to the future! Wake!—beware!

[Exit BRAGELONE.]

Louis. Gone! Most ill-omen'd voice and fearful shape!
 Scarce seem'd it of the earth; a thing that breathed
 But to fulfil some dark and dire behest;
 To appal us, and to vanish.—The quick blood
 Halts in my veins. Oh! never till this hour
 Heard I the voice that awed the soul of Louis,
 Or met one brow that did not quail before
 My kingly gaze! And this unmitred monk!
 I'm glad that none were by.—It was a dream;
 So let its memory like a dream depart.
 I am no tyrant—nay, I love my people.
 My wars were made but for the fame of France!
 My pomp! why, tush!—what king can play the hermit?
 My conscience smites me not; and but last eve
 I did confess, and was absolved!—A bigot;
 And half, methinks, a heretic! I wish
 The Jesuits had the probing of his doctrines.
 Well, well, 'tis o'er!—What ho, there!

Enter Gentleman of the Chamber.

Louis. Wine! Apprise
 Once more the duchess of our presence.—Stay!
 Yon monk, what doth he here?

Gent. I know not, sire,
 Nor saw him till this day.

Louis. Strange!—Wine!
 [Exit Gentleman.]

SCENE V.

DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE and LOUIS.

Louis. Well, madam,
 We've tarried long your coming, and meanwhile
 Have found your proxy in a madman monk,
 Whom, for the future, we would pray you spare us.

Re-enter Gentleman with wine.

So, so! the draught restores us. Fair La Vallière,
Make not yon holy man your confessor;
You'll find small comfort in his lectures.

Duch. de la Vall. Sire,

His meaning is more kindly than his manner.

I pray you, pardon him.

Louis.

Ay, ay! No more;

Let's think of him no more. You had, this morn,
A courtlier visitant, methinks—De Lauzun?

Duch. de la Vall.

Yes, sire.

Louis.

A smooth and gallant gentleman.

You're silent. Silence is assent; 'tis well!

Duch. de la Vall. [aside]. Down, my full heart! The

duke declares your wish

Is that—that I should bind this broken heart

And—no! I cannot speak—

[With great and sudden energy.]

You wish me wed, sire?

Louis. 'Twere best that you should wed; and yet, De
Lauzun

Is scarce the happiest choice.—But as thou wilt.

Duch. de la Vall. “'Twere best that I should wed!”—

thou saidst it, Louis;

Say it once more!

Louis. In honesty, I think so.

Duch. de la Vall. My choice is made, then—I obey the
flat,

And will become a bride!

Louis.

The duke has sped!

I trust he loves thyself, and not thy dower.

Duch. de la Vall. The duke! what, hast thou read so
ill this soul

That thou couldst deem thus meanly of that book

Whose every page was bared to thee? A bitter

Lot has been mine—and this sums up the measure.

Go, Louis! go!—All glorious as thou art—

Earth's Agamemnon—the great king of men—

Thou wert not worthy of this woman's heart!

Louis. Her passion moves me!—Then your choice has fallen

Upon a nobler bridegroom?

Duch. de la Vall. Sire, it hath!

Louis. May I demand that choice.

Duch. de la Vall.

Too soon thou'lt learn it.

Not yet! Ah me!

Louis. Nay, sigh not, my sweet duchess.

Speak not so sadly. What though love hath past,

Friendship remains; and still my fondest hope

Is to behold thee happy. Come!—thy hand;

Let us be friends! We are so!

Duch. de la Vall.

Friends!—no more!

So, it hath come to this! I am contented!

Yes—we are friends!

Louis.

And when your choice is made,

You will permit your friend to hail your bridals?

Duch. de la Vall. Ay, when my choice is made!

Louis.

This poor De Lauzun

Hath then no chance? I'm glad of it, and thus

Seal our new bond of friendship on your hand.

Adieu!—and Heaven protect you!

[Exit LOUIS.]

Duch. de la Vall. [gazing after him]. Heaven hath heard thee;

And in this last most cruel, but most gracious,
Proof of thy coldness, breaks the lingering chain
That bound my soul to earth.

Enter BRAGELONE.

O holy father!

Brother to him whose grave my guilt prepared,

Witness my firm resolve, support my struggles,

And guide me back to Virtue through Repentance!

Brage. Pause, ere thou dost decide.

Duch. de la Vall.

I've paused too long.

And now, impatient of this weary load,

Sigh for repose.

Brage.

O Heaven, receive her back!

Through the wide earth, the sorrowing dove hath flown

And found no haven; weary though her wing

And sullied with the dust of lengthen'd travail,
Now let her flee away and be at rest!
The peace that man has broken—THOU restore,
Whose holiest name is FATHER!

Duch. de la Vall.

Hear us, Heaven.

ACT V.—SCENE I.

Enter MADAME DE MONTESPAN, GRAMMONT, and Courtiers.

Mme. de Mon. So she has fled from court—the saintly duchess ;
A convent's grate must shield this timorous virtue.
Methinks they're not so many to assail it !
Well, trust me, one short moon of fast and penance
Will bring us back the recreant novice——

Gram. And
End the eventful comedy by marriage.
Lauzun against the world were even odds ;
But Lauzun *with* the world—what saint can stand it ?
Mme. de Mon. [*aside*]. Lauzun !—the traitor ! What !
to give my rival
The triumph to reject the lawful love
Of him whose lawless passion first betray'd me !

Gram. Talk of the devil ! Humph—you know the proverb.

Enter LAUZUN.

Lau. Good day, my friends. Your pardon, madam ; I
Thought 'twas the sun that blinded me.— [*Aside.*]
Athenè !

Pray you a word.

Mme. de Mon. [*aloud, and turning away disdainfully*].
We are not at leisure, duke.

Lau. Ha ! [*aside*]. Nay, Athenè, spare your friend these
graces.

Forget your state one moment ; have you ask'd
The king the office that you undertook
To make my own ? My creditors are urgent.

Mme. de Mon. [*aloud*]. No, my lord duke, I have not
ask'd the king !

I grieve to hear your fortunes are so broken,
And that your honour'd and august device,
To mend them by your marriage, fail'd.

Gram. She hits him
Hard on the hip. Ha, ha!—the poor De Lauzun!

Lau. Sir!—Nay, I'm calm!

Mme de Mon. Pray, may we dare to ask
How long you've loved the duchess?

Lau. Ever since
You were her friend and confidante.

Mme. de Mon. You're bitter.
Perchance you deem your love a thing to boast of.

Lau. To boast of!—Yes! 'Tis something ev'n to love
The only woman Louis ever honour'd!

Mme. de Mon. [*laying her hand on LAUZUN'S arm*]. Insolent! You shall rue this! If I speak
Your name to Louis, coupled with a favour,
The suit shall be your banishment!

[*Exit MADAME DE MONTESPAN.*]

First Courtier.

Let's follow.

Ha! ha!—Dear duke, your game, I fear, is lost!
You've play'd the knave, and thrown away the king.

Courtiers. Ha! ha!—Adieu!

[*Exeunt.*]

Lau. Ha! ha!—The devil take you!
So, she would ruin me! Fore-arm'd—fore-warn'd!
I have the king's ear yet, and know some secrets
That could destroy her! Since La Vallière's flight,
Louis grows sad and thoughtful, and looks cold
On her vain rival, who too coarsely shows
The world the stuff court ladies' hearts are made of.
She will undo herself—and I will help her.
Weave on thy web, false Montespán, weave on;
The bigger spider shall devour the smaller.
The war's declared—'tis clear that one must fall:—
I'll be polite—the lady to the wall!

[*Exit LAUZUN.*]

SCENE II.

Sunset—the old Château of La Vallière—the Convent of the Carmelites at a distance—the same scene as that with which the play opens.

Enter the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE and BRAGELONE from the Château.

Duch. de la Vall. Once more, ere yet I take farewell of earth,

I see mine old, familiar, maiden home !
All how unchanged !—The same the hour, the scene,
The very season of the year !—the stillness
Of the smooth wave—the stillness of the trees,
Where the winds sleep like dreams !—and, oh ! the calm
Of the blue heavens around yon holy spires,
Pointing, like gospel truths, through calm and storm,
To man's great home !

Brage. [aside]. Oh ! how the years recede !
Upon this spot I spoke to her of love,
And dreamt of bliss for earth ! *[The vesper-bell tolls.]*

Duch. de la Vall. Hark ! the deep sound,
That seems a voice from some invisible spirit,
Claiming the world for God.—When last I heard it
Hallow this air, here stood my mother, living ;
And I—was then a mother's *pride* !—and yonder
Came thy brave brother in his glittering mail ;
And—ah ! these thoughts are bitter !—were he living,
How would he scorn them !

Brage. [who has been greatly agitated]. No !—ah, no !—
thou wrong'st him !

Duch. de la Vall. Yet, were he living, could I but receive

From his own lips my pardon, and his blessing,
My soul would deem one dark memorial rased
Out of the page most blister'd with its tears !

Brage. Then have thy wish ! and in these wrecks of man

Worn to decay, and rent by many a storm,
Survey the worm the world call'd Bragelone.

Duch. de la Vall. Avaunt!—avaunt!—I dream!—the
dead return'd

To earth to mock me!—No! this hand is warm!

I have one murder less upon my soul.

I thank thee, Heaven!—[swoons].

Brage. [supporting her]. The blow strikes home; and
yet

What is my life to her? Louise!—She moves not;

She does not breathe; how still she sleeps! I saw her

Sleep in her mother's arms, and then, in sleep

She smiled. *There's no smile now!*—poor child! One
kiss!

It is a brother's kiss—it has no guilt;

Kind Heaven, it has no guilt.—I have survived

All earthlier thoughts: her crime, my vows, effaced them.

A brother's kiss!—Away! I'm human still;

I thought I had been stronger; God forgive me!

Awake, Louise!—awake! She breathes once more;

The spell is broke; the marble warms to life!

And I—freeze back to stone!

Duch. de la Vall.

I heard a voice

That cried "Louise!"—Speak, speak!—my sense is dim,

And struggles darkly with a blessed ray

That shot from heaven.—My shame hath not destroy'd
thee!

Brage. No!—life might yet serve thee!—and I lived on,

Dead to all else. I took the vows, and then,

Ere yet I laid me down, and bade the Past

Fade like a ghost before the dawn of heaven,

One sacred task was left.—If love was dust,

Love, like ourselves, hath an immortal soul,

That doth survive whate'er it takes from clay;

And that—the holier part of love—became

A thing to watch thy steps—a guardian spirit

To hover round, disguised, unknown, undream'd of,

To soothe the sorrow, to redeem the sin,

And lead thy soul to peace!

Duch. de la Vall.

O bright revenge!

Love strong as death, and nobler far than woman's!

Brage. To peace—ah, let me deem so!—the mute
cloister,

The spoken ritual, and the solemn veil,

Are nought themselves;—the Huguenot abjures
 The monkish cell, but breathes, perchance, the prayer
 That speeds as quick to the Eternal Throne!
 In our own souls must be the solitude;
 In our own thoughts the sanctity!—'Tis *then*
 The feeling that our vows have built the wall
 Passion can storm not, nor temptation sap,
 Gives calm its charter, roots out wild regret,
 And makes the heart the world-disdaining cloister.
This—this is peace! but pause, if in thy breast
 Linger the wish of earth. Alas! all oaths
 Are vain, if nature shudders to record them—
 The subtle spirit 'scapes the sealèd vessel!
 The false devotion is the true despair!

Duch. de la Vall. Fear not!—I feel 'tis not the walls of stone,

Told beads, nor murmur'd hymns, that bind the heart,
 Or exorcise the world; the spell's the thought
 That where most weak we've banish'd the temptation,
 And reconciled, what earth would still divide,
 The human memories and the immortal conscience.

Brage. Doubt fades before thine accents. On the day
 That gives thee to the veil we'll meet once more.
 Let mine be man's last blessing in this world.
 Oh! tell me then, thou'rt happier than thou hast been;
 And when we part, I'll seek some hermit cell
 Beside the walls that compass thee, and prayer,
 Morning and night, shall join our souls in heaven.

Duch. de la Vall. Yes, generous spirit! think not that my future

Shall be repining as the past. Thou livest,
 And conscience smiles again. The shatter'd bark
 Glides to its haven. Joy! the land is near.

[*Exit DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE into the Château.*]

Brage. So, it is past!—the secret is disclosed!
 The hand she did reject on earth has led her
 To holier ties. I have not lived in vain!
 Yet who had dream'd, when through the ranks of war
 Went the loud shout of "France and Bragelone!"
 That the monk's cowl would close on all my laurels?
 A never-heard philosopher is life!—
 Our happiest hours are sleep's;—and sleep proclaims

Did we but listen to its warning voice,
 That REST is earth's elixir. Why, then, pine
 That, ere our years grow feverish with their toil,
 Too weary-worn to find the rest they sigh for,
 We learn betimes THE MORAL OF REPOSE?
 I will lie down, and sleep away this world.
 The pause of care, the slumber of tired passion,
 Why, why defer till night is well-nigh spent?
 When the brief sun that gild the landscape sets,
 When o'er the music on the leaves of life
 Chill silence falls, and every fluttering hope
 That voiced the world with song has gone to rest,
 Then let thy soul, from the poor labourer, learn
 "Sleep's sweetest taken soonest!"

*[As he moves away, his eye falls upon a glove
 dropped by the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE—he
 takes it up.]*

And this hath touch'd her hand!—it were a comfort
 To hoard a single relic!

[Kisses the glove, and then suddenly dropping it.]
 No!—"Tis sinful!

[Exit BRAGELONE.]

SCENE III.

*The exterior of the Gothic Convent of the Carmelites—The windows
 illumined—Music heard from within—A crowd without—Enter Courtiers,
 Ladies, Priests, &c., and pass through the door of the chapel, in the centre
 of the building.*

*Enter LAUZUN from a door in the side wing of the
 Convent—to him, GRAMMONT.*

Lau. Where hast thou left the king?

Gram. Not one league hence.

Lau. Ere the clock strikes, La Vallière takes the veil.

Gram. Great Heaven! so soon!—and Louis sent me on,
 To learn how thou hadst prosper'd with the duchess.
 He is so sanguine—this imperious king,
 Who never heard a "No" from living lips!
 How did she take his letter?

Lau. In sad silence;
Then mused a little while, and some few tears
Stole down her cheeks, as, with a trembling hand,
She gave me back the scroll.

Gram. You mean her answer.

Lau. No; the king's letter. "Tell him that I thank him;"

(Such were her words;) "but that my choice is made;
And ev'n this last assurance of his love
I dare not keep: 'tis only when I pray,
That I may think of him. This is my answer."

Gram. No more?—no written word?

Lau. None, Grammont. Then
She rose and left me; and I heard the bell
Calling the world to see a woman scorn it.

Gram. The king will never brook it. He will grasp her
Back from this yawning tomb of living souls.
The news came on him with such sudden shock;
The long noviciate thus abridged! and she—
Ever so waxen to his wayward will!—
She cannot yet be marble.

Lau. Wrong'd affection
Makes many a Niobe from tears. Haste, Grammont,
Back to the king, and bid him fly to save,
Or nerve his heart to lose, her. I will follow,—
My second charge fulfill'd.

Gram. And what is that?

Lau. Revenge and justice!—Go!

[Exit GRAMMONT.]

Lau. [looking down the stage]. I hear her laugh—
I catch the glitter of her festive robe!
Athenè comes to triumph—and to tremble!

SCENE IV.

MADAME DE MONTESPAN, Courtiers, and LAUZUN.

Mme. de Mon. [aside]. Now for the crowning cup of
sparkling fortune!
A rarer pearl than Egypt's queen dissolved
I have immersed in that delicious draught,

A woman's triumph o'er a fairer rival!

[*As she turns to enter the convent, she perceives LAUZUN.*
What! you here, duke!

Lau. Ay, madam; I've not yet
To thank you for—my banishment!

Mme. de Mon. The Ides
Of March are come—not over!

Lau. Are they not?
For some they may be! You are here to witness—

Mme. de Mon. My triumph!
Lau. And to take a friend's condolence.
I bear this letter from the king!

Mme. de Mon. The king?
[*Reads the letter.*

"We do not blame you; blame belongs to love,
And love had nought with you." What! what! I tremble!
"The Duke de Lauzun, of these lines the bearer,
Confirms their purport: from our royal court
We do excuse your presence." Banish'd, duke?
Is that the word?—What, banish'd!

Lau. Hush!—you mar
The holy silence of the place. 'Tis true;
You read aright. Our gracious king permits you
To quit Versailles. Versailles is not the world.

Mme. de Mon. Perdition!—banish'd!
Lau. You can take the veil.

Meanwhile, enjoy your triumph!
Mme. de Mon. Triumph!—Ah!

She triumphs o'er me to the last. My soul
Finds hell on earth—and hers make earth a heaven!

Lau. Hist!—will you walk within?
Mme. de Mon. O, hateful world!

What?—hath it come to this?
Lau. You spoil your triumph!

Mme. de Mon. Lauzun, I thank thee—thank thee—thank
—and curse thee.

[*Exit MADAME DE MONTESPAN.*
Lau. [*looking after her with a subdued laugh*]. Ha, ha!
—the broken heart can know no pang

Like that which racks the bad heart when its sting
Poisons itself. Now, then, away to Louis.
The bell still tolls: there's time. This soft La Vallière!

The only thing that ever baffled Lauzun,
 And felt not his revenge!—revenge, poor soul!
 Revenge upon a dove!—she shall be saved
 From the pale mummies of yon Memphian vault,
 Or the great Louis will be less than man,—
 Or that fond sinner will be more than woman.

[Exit LAUZUN.]

SCENE V.

The interior of the Chapel of the Carmelite Convent—On the foreground, Courtiers, Ladies, &c.—At the back of the stage, the altar, only partially seen through the surrounding throng—The officials pass to and fro, swinging the censers—The stage darkened—Lights suspended along the aisle, and tapers by the altar.

As the scene opens, solemn music, to which is chaunted the following

HYMN.

Come from the world, O weary soul,
 For run the race and near the goal!
 Flee from the net, O lonely dove,
 Thy nest is built the clouds above!
 Turn, wild and warm with panting fear,
 And slake thy thirst, thou wounded deer,
 In Jordan's holy springs!

Arise! O fearful soul, arise!
 For broke the chain and calm the skies!
 As moths fly upward to the star,
 The light allures thee from afar.
 Though earth is lost, and space is wide,
 The smile of God shall be thy guide,
 And Faith and Hope thy wings!

[*As the Hymn ends, BRAGELONE enters, and stands apart in the background.*]

First Cour. Three minutes more, and earth has lost La Vallière!

Second Cour. So young!—so fair!

Third Cour. 'Twas whisper'd, that the king

Would save her yet!

First Cour. What! snatch her from the altar?
 He durst not, man!

Enter LOUIS, GRAMMONT, and LAUZUN.

Louis. Hold ! we forbid the rites !

[As the King advances hastily up the aisle, BRAGELONE places himself before him.

Back monk ! revere the presence of the king !

Brage. And thou the palace of the King of kings ;

Louis. Dotard ! we claim our subject.

Brage. She hath past

The limit of your realm. Ye priests of Heaven,
Complete your solemn task !—The church's curse
Hangs on the air. Descendant of Saint Louis,
Move—and the avalanche falls !

[The DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE, still dressed in the bridal and gorgeous attire assumed before the taking of the veil, descends from the altar.

Duch. de la Vall. No, holy friend !

I need it not ; my soul is my protector.

Nay, thou may'st trust me.

Brage. *[after a pause.]* Thou art right.—I trust thee ?

Louis *[leading the Duch. de la Vallière to the front of the stage].* Thou hast not ta'en the veil ?—Ev'n Time had mercy.

Thou art saved !—thou art saved !—to love—to life !

Duch. de la Vall. Ah, sire !

Louis. Call me not sire !—forget that dreary time

When thou wert duchess, and myself the king.

Fly back, fly back, to those delicious hours

When I was but thy lover and thy Louis !

And thou my dream—my bird—my fairy flower—

My violet, shrinking in the modest shade

Until transplanted to this breast—to haunt

The common air with odours ! Oh, Louise !

Hear me !—the fickle lust of change allured me,

The pride thy virtues wounded arm'd against thee,

Until I dream'd I loved thyself no longer ;

But now this dread resolve, this awe of parting,

Re-binds me to thee—bares my soul before me—

Dispers the lying mists that veil'd thine image,

And tells me that I never loved but thee !

Duch. de la Vall. I am not then despised !—thou lov'st me still !

And when I pray for thee, my heart may feel
That it hath nothing to forgive!

Louis.

Louise!

Thou dost renounce this gloomy purpose?

Duch. de la Vall.

Never!

It is not gloomy!—think'st thou it is gloom
To feel that, as my soul becomes more pure,
Heaven will more kindly listen to the prayers
That rise for *thee*?—is that thought *gloom*, my Louis?

Louis. Oh! slay me not with tenderness! Return!

And if thy conscience startle at my love,
Be still my friend—my angel!

Duch. de la Vall.

I am weak,

But, in the knowledge of my weakness, strong!
I could not breathe the air that's sweet with thee,
Nor cease to love!—in flight my only safety;
And were that flight not made by solemn vows
Eternal, it were bootless; for the wings
Of my wild soul know but two bournes to speed to—
Louis and Heaven! And, oh, in Heaven at last
My soul, unsinning, may unite with Louis!

Louis. I do implore thee!—

Duch. de la Vall.

No! thou canst not tempt me!

My heart already is the nun.

Louis.

Thou know'st not

I have dismiss'd thy rival from the Court.
Return!—though mine no more, at least thy Louis
Shall know no second love.

Duch. de la Vall.

What! wilt thou, Louis,

Renounce for me eternally my rival,
And live alone for——

Louis.

Thee! Louise, I swear it!

Duch. de la Vall. [*raising her arms to Heaven*]. Father,

at length, I dare to hope for pardon,

For now remorse may prove itself sincere!
Bear witness, Heaven! I never loved this man
So well as now! and never seem'd *his* love
Built on so sure a rock! Upon thine altar
I lay the offering. I revoke the past;
For Louis, Heaven was left—and now I leave
Louis, when tenfold more beloved, for Heaven!
Ah! pray with me! Be this our latest token—

This memory of sweet moments—sweet, though sinless !
Ah ! pray with me ! that I may hive till death
The thought—" we pray'd together for forgiveness ! "

Louis. Oh ! wherefore never knew I till this hour
The treasure I shall lose ! I dare not call thee
Back from the Heaven where thou art half already !
Thy soul demands celestial destinies,
And stoops no more to earth. Be thine the peace,
And mine the penance ! Yet these awful walls,
The rigid laws of this severest order,
Yon spectral shapes, this human sepulchre,—
And thou, the soft, the delicate, the highborn,
The adored delight of Europe's mightiest king,—
Thou canst not bear it !

Duch. de la Vall. I have borne much worse—
Thy change and thy desertion !—Let it pass !
There is no terror in the things without ;
Our souls alone the palace or the prison ;
And the one thought that I have fled from sin
Will fill the cell with images more glorious,
And haunt its silence with a mightier music,
Than ever throng'd illumined halls, or broke
From harps by mortal strung !

Louis. I will not hear thee !
I cannot brave these thoughts. Thy angel voice
But tells me what a sun of heavenly beauty
Glides from the earth, and leaves my soul to darkness.
This is *my* work !—'twas I for whom that soul
Forsook its native element ; for me,
Sorrow consumed thy youth, and conscience gnaw'd
That patient, tender, unapproachful heart.
And now this crowns the whole ! the priest—the altar—
The sacrifice—the victim ! Touch me not !
Speak not ! I am unmann'd enough already.
I—I—I choke ! These tears—let them speak for me.
Now ! now thy hand—farewell ! farewell, for ever !

[*Exit* LOUIS.]

Duch. de la Vall. Be firm, my heart, be firm !

[*After a pause, turning to BRAGELONE, with a slight smile.*

'Tis past ! we've conquered !

[*The DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE re-ascends to the altar—the crowd close around.*

[*Music.*

CHORUS.

Hark! to the nuptial train are open'd wide
The Eternal Gates. Hosanna to the bride!

Gram. She has ta'en the veil—the last dread rite is done.

Abbess [*from the altar*]. Sister Louise! before the eternal grate

Becomes thy barrier from the living world,

It is allow'd thee once more to behold

The face of men, and bid farewell to friendship.

Brage. [*aside*]. Why do I shudder? why shrinks back my being

From our last gaze, like Nature from the Grave?

One moment, and one look, and o'er her image

Thick darkness falls, till Death, that morning star,

Heralds immortal day. I hear her steps

Treading the mournful silence; o'er my soul

Pauses the freezing time. O Lord, support me!

One effort more—one effort!—Wake, my soul!

'Tis thy last trial; wilt thou play the craven?

[*The crowd give way, the DUCHESS DE LA VALLIÈRE in the habit of the Carmelite nuns, passes down the steps of the altar, led by the Abbess—As she pauses to address those whom she recognises in the crowd, the chorus chaunts:—*

Sister, look and speak thy last,
From the world thou'rt dying fast;
While farewell to life thou'rt giving,
Dead already to the living.

Duch. de la Vall. [*coming to the front of the stage, sees*

LAUZUN.] Lauzun: thou serv'st a king, whate'er his faults,

Who merits all thy homage: honour—love him.

His glory needs no friendship; but in sickness

Or sorrow, *kings* need love. Be faithful, Lauzun!

And, far from thy loud world, one lowly voice

Shall not forget thee.

Brage. [aside]. All the strife is hush'd !
My heart's wild sea lies mute !

Duch. de la Vall. [approaching BRAGELONE, and kneeling to him]. Now! friend and father,
Bless the poor Nun !

Brage. As Duchess of La Vallière
Thou wert not happy ; as the Carmelite Sister,
Say—art thou happy ?

Duch. de la Vall. Yes !

Brage. [laying his hand on her head]. O Father, bless
her !

CHORUS.

Hark ! in Heaven is mirth !
Jubilate !
Grief leaves guilt on earth !
Jubilate !
Joy for sin forgiven !
Jubilate !
Come, O Bride of Heaven !
Jubilate !

[Curtain falls slowly.]



THE LADY OF LYONS ;

OR,

LOVE AND PRIDE.

TO
THE AUTHOR OF "ION,"

WHOSE GENIUS AND EXAMPLE HAVE ALIKE CONTRIBUTED
TOWARDS THE REGENERATION OF

The National Drama,

THIS PLAY IS INSCRIBED.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

BEAUSEANT, *a rich gentleman of Lyons, in love with, and refused by, Pauline Deschappelles.*

GLAVIS, *his friend, also a rejected suitor to Pauline.*

COLONEL (afterwards General) DAMAS, *cousin to Mme. Deschappelles, and an officer in the French army.*

MONSIEUR DESCHAPPELLES, *a Lyonnese merchant, father to Pauline.*

LANDLORD OF THE GOLDEN LION.

GASPAR.

CLAUDE MELNOTTE.

FIRST OFFICER, SECOND OFFICER, THIRD OFFICER.

Servants, Notary, &c.

MADAME DESCHAPPELLES.

PAULINE, *her daughter.*

THE WIDOW MELNOTTE, *mother to Claude.*

JANET, *the innkeeper's daughter.*

MARIAN, *maid to Pauline.*

Scene—Lyons and the neighbourhood.

Time—1795–1798.

PREFACE.

AN indistinct recollection of the very pretty little tale, called "The Bellows-Mender," suggested the plot of this Drama. The incidents are, however, greatly altered from those in the tale, and the characters entirely re-cast.

Having long had a wish to illustrate certain periods of the French history, so, in the selection of the date in which the scenes of this play are laid, I saw that the era of the Republic was that in which the incidents were rendered most probable, in which the probationary career of the hero could well be made sufficiently rapid for dramatic effect, and in which the character of the time itself was depicted by the agencies necessary to the conduct of the narrative. For during the early years of the first and most brilliant successes of the French Republic, in the general ferment of society, and the brief equalization of ranks, Claude's high-placed love, his ardent feelings, his unsettled principles (the struggle between which makes the passion of this drama), his ambition, and his career, were phenomena that characterized the age, and in which the spirit of the nation went along with the extravagance of the individual.

The play itself was composed with a twofold object. In the first place, sympathizing with the enterprise of Mr. Macready, as Manager of Covent Garden, and believing that many of the higher interests of the Drama were involved in the success or failure of an enterprise equally hazardous and disinterested, I felt, if I may so presume to express myself, something of the Brotherhood of Art; and it was only for Mr. Macready to think it possible that I might serve him in order to induce me to make the attempt.

Secondly, in that attempt I was mainly anxious to see whether or not, after the comparative failure on the stage

of "The Duchess de la Vallière," certain critics had truly declared that it was not in my power to attain the art of dramatic construction and theatrical effect. I felt, indeed, that it was in this that a writer, accustomed to the narrative class of composition, would have the most both to learn and *unlearn*. Accordingly, it was to the development of the plot and the arrangement of the incidents that I directed my chief attention;—and I sought to throw whatever belongs to poetry less into the diction and the "felicity of words" than into the construction of the story, the creation of the characters, and the spirit of the pervading sentiment.

The authorship of the play was neither avowed nor suspected until the play had established itself in public favour. The announcement of my name was the signal for attacks, chiefly political, to which it is now needless to refer. When a work has outlived for some time the earlier hostilities of criticism, there comes a new race of critics to which a writer may, for the most part, calmly trust for a fair consideration, whether of the faults or the merits of his performance.

THE LADY OF LYONS;

OR,

LOVE AND PRIDE.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

A room in the house of M. DESCHAPPELLES, at Lyons. PAULINE reclining on a sofa; MARIAN, her maid, fanning her—Flowers and notes on a table beside the sofa—MADAME DESCHAPPELLES seated—The gardens are seen from the open window.

Mme. Deschap. Marian, put that rose a little more to the left.—[*MARIAN alters the position of a rose in PAULINE's hair.*]—Ah, so!—that improves the hair,—the *tournure*, the *je ne sais quoi*!—You are certainly very handsome, child!—quite my style;—I don't wonder that you make such a sensation!—Old, young, rich, and poor, do homage to the Beauty of Lyons!—Ah, we live again in our children,—especially when they have our eyes and complexion!

Pauline [*languidly*]. Dear mother, you spoil your Pauline!—[*Aside.*] I wish I knew who sent me these flowers!

Mme. Deschap. No, child!—If I praise you, it is only to inspire you with a proper ambition.—You are born to make a great marriage.—Beauty is valuable or worthless according as you invest the property to the best advantage.—Marian, go and order the carriage! [*Exit MARIAN.*]

Pauline. Who can it be that sends me, every day, these beautiful flowers?—how sweet they are!

Enter Servant.

Servant. Monsieur Beauscant, Madam.

Mme. Deschap. Let him enter. Pauline, this is another

offer!—I know it is!—Your father should engage an additional clerk to keep the account-book of your conquests.

Enter BEAUSEANT.

Beau. Ah, ladies, how fortunate I am to find you at home!—*[Aside.]* How lovely she looks!—It is a great sacrifice I make in marrying into a family in trade!—they will be eternally grateful!—*[Aloud.]* Madam, you will permit me a word with your charming daughter.—*[Approaches PAULINE, who rises disdainfully.]*—Mademoiselle, I have ventured to wait upon you, in a hope that you must long since have divined. Last night, when you outshone all the beauty of Lyons, you completed your conquest over me! You know that my fortune is not exceeded by any estate in the province,—you know that, but for the Revolution, which has defrauded me of my titles, I should be noble. May I, then, trust that you will not reject my alliance? I offer you my hand and heart.

Pauline [aside]. He has the air of a man who confers a favour!—*[Aloud.]* Sir, you are very condescending—I thank you humbly; but, being duly sensible of my own demerits, you must allow me to decline the honour you propose. *[Curtseys, and turns away.]*

Beau. Decline! impossible!—you are not serious!—Madam, suffer me to appeal to *you*. I am a suitor for your daughter's hand—the settlements shall be worthy her beauty and my station. May I wait on M. Deschappelles?

Mme. Deschap. M. Deschappelles never interferes in the domestic arrangements,—you are very obliging. If you were still a marquis, or if my daughter were intended to marry a commoner,—why, perhaps, we might give you the preference.

Beau. A commoner!—we are all commoners in France now.

Mme. Deschap. In France, yes; but there is a nobility still left in the other countries in Europe. We are quite aware of your good qualities, and don't doubt that you will find some lady more suitable to your pretensions. We shall be always happy to see you as an acquaintance, M. Beauseant!—My dear child, the carriage will be here presently.

Beau. Say no more, madam!—say no more!—*[Aside.]* Refused! and by a merchant's daughter!—refused! It will be all over Lyons before sunset!—I will go and bury myself in my château, study philosophy, and turn woman-hater. Refused! they ought to be sent to a madhouse!—Ladies, I have the honour to wish you a very good morning. *[Exit.]*

Mme. Deschap. How forward these men are!—I think, child, we kept up our dignity. Any girl, however inexperienced, knows how to accept an offer, but it requires a vast deal of address to refuse one with proper condescension and disdain. I used to practise it at school with the dancing-master.

Enter DAMAS.

Damas. Good morning, cousin Deschappelles.—Well, Pauline, are you recovered from last night's ball?—So many triumphs must be very fatiguing. Even M. Glavis sighed most piteously when you departed; but that might be the effect of the supper.

Pauline. M. Glavis, indeed!

Mme. Deschap. M. Glavis?—as if my daughter would think of M. Glavis!

Damas. Hey-day!—why not?—His father left him a very pretty fortune, and his birth is higher than yours, cousin Deschappelles. But perhaps you are looking to M. Beauseant,—his father was a marquis before the Revolution.

Pauline. M. Beauseant!—Cousin, you delight in tormenting me!

Mme. Deschap. Don't mind him, Pauline!—Cousin Damas, you have no susceptibility of feeling,—there is a certain indelicacy in all your ideas.—M. Beauseant knows already that he is no match for my daughter!

Damas. Pooh! pooh! one would think you intended your daughter to marry a prince!

Mme. Deschap. Well, and if I did?—what then?—Many a foreign prince—

Damas *[interrupting her]*. Foreign prince!—foreign fiddlestick!—you ought to be ashamed of such nonsense at your time of life.

Mme. Deschap. My time of life!—That is an expression never applied to any lady till she is sixty-nine and three-quarters ;—and only then by the clergyman of the parish.

Enter Servant.

Servant. Madame, the carriage is at the door. [*Exit.*

Mme. Deschap. Come, child, put on your bonnet—you really have a very thorough-bred air—not at all like your poor father.—[*Fondly.*] Ah, you little coquette! when a young lady is always making mischief, it is a sure sign that she takes after her mother!

Pauline. Good day, cousin Damas—and a better humour to you.—[*Going back to the table and taking the flowers.*] Who could have sent me these flowers?

Exeunt PAULINE and MADAME DESCHAPPELLES.

Damas. That would be an excellent girl if her head had not been turned. I fear she is now become incorrigible! Zounds, what a lucky fellow I am to be still a bachelor! They may talk of the devotion of the sex—but the most faithful attachment in life is that of a woman in love—with herself. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The exterior of a small Village Inn—sign, the Golden Lion—A few leagues from Lyons, which is seen at a distance.

Beau. [*behind the scenes*]. Yes, you may bait the horses ; we shall rest here an hour.

Enter BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.

Gla. Really, my dear Beauseant, consider that I have promised to spend a day or two with you at your château,—that I am quite at your mercy for my entertainment,—and yet you are as silent and as gloomy as a mute at a funeral, or an Englishman at a party of pleasure.

Beau. Bear with me!—the fact is that I am miserable.

Gla. You—the richest and gayest bachelor in Lyons?

Beau. It is because I am a bachelor that I am miserable.—Thou knowest Pauline—the only daughter of the rich merchant, Mons. Deschappelles?

Gla. Know her?—who does not?—as pretty as Venus, and as proud as Juno.

Beau. Her taste is worse than her pride. — [*Drawing himself up.*] Know, Glavis, she has actually refused me!

Gla. [*aside*]. So she has me!—very consoling! In all cases of heart-ache, the application of another man's disappointment draws out the pain and allays the irritation.

—[*Aloud.*] Refused you! and wherefore?

Beau. I know not, unless it be because the Revolution swept away my father's title of Marquis,—and she will not marry a commoner. Now, as we have no noblemen left in France,—as we are all citizens and equals, she can only hope that, in spite of the war, some English Milord or German Count will risk his life, by coming to Lyons, that this *fille du Roturier* may condescend to accept him. Refused me, and with scorn!—By Heaven, I'll not submit to it tamely:—I'm in a perfect fever of mortification and rage.—Refuse me, indeed!

Gla. Be comforted, my dear fellow,—I will tell you a secret. For the same reason she refused me!

Beau. You!—that's a very different matter! But give me your hand, Glavis,—we'll think of some plan to humble her. *Mille diables!* I should like to see her married to a strolling player!

Enter Landlord and his Daughter from the Inn.

Land. Your servant, citizen Beauseant,—servant, sir. Perhaps you will take dinner before you proceed to your château; our larder is most plentifully supplied.

Beau. I have no appetite.

Gla. Nor I. Still it is bad travelling on an empty stomach. What have you got? [*Takes and looks over the bill of fare.*]

[*Shout without.*] “Long live the Prince!—Long live the Prince!”

Beau. The Prince!—what Prince is that? I thought we had no princes left in France.

Land. Ha, ha! the lads always call him Prince. He has just won the prize in the shooting-match, and they are taking him home in triumph.

Beau. Him! and who's Mr. Him?

Land. Who should he be but the pride of the village, Claude Melnotte?—Of course you have heard of Claude Melnotte?

Gla. [*Giving back the bill of fare*]. Never had that honour. Soup—ragout of hare—roast chicken, and, in short, all you have!

Beau. The son of old Melnotte, the gardener?

Land. Exactly so—a wonderful young man.

Beau. How, wonderful?—Are his cabbages better than other people's?

Land. Nay, he don't garden any more; his father left him well off. He's only a genus.

Gla. A what?

Land. A genus!—a man who can do everything in life except anything that's useful;—that's a genus.

Beau. You raise my curiosity;—proceed.

Land. Well, then, about four years ago, old Melnotte died, and left his son well to do in the world. We then all observed that a great change came over young Claude: he took to reading and Latin, and hired a professor from Lyons, who had so much in his head that he was forced to wear a great full-bottom wig to cover it. Then he took a fencing-master, and a dancing-master, and a music-master; and then he learned to paint; and at last it was said that young Claude was to go to Paris, and set up for a painter. The lads laughed at him at first; but he is a stout fellow, is Claude, and as brave as a lion, and soon taught them to laugh the wrong side of their mouths; and now all the boys swear by him, and all the girls pray for him.

Beau. A promising youth, certainly! And why do they call him Prince?

Land. Partly because he is at the head of them all, and partly because he has such a proud way with him, and wears such fine clothes—and, in short, looks like a prince.

Beau. And what could have turned the foolish fellow's brain? The Revolution, I suppose?

Land. Yes—the revolution that turns us all topsy-turvy—the revolution of Love.

Beau. Romantic young Corydon! And with whom is he in love?

Land. Why—but it is a secret, gentlemen.

Beau. Oh! certainly.

Land. Why, then, I hear from his mother, good soul! that it is no less a person than the Beauty of Lyons, Pauline Deschappelles.

Beau. and Glavis. Ha, ha!—Capital!

Land. You may laugh, but it is as true as I stand here.

Beau. And what does the Beauty of Lyons say to his suit?

Land. Lord, sir, she never even condescended to look at him, though when he was a boy he worked in her father's garden.

Beau. Are you sure of that?

Land. His mother says that Mademoiselle does not know him by sight.

Beau. [*taking Glavis aside*]. I have hit it,—I have it;—here is our revenge! Here is a prince for our haughty damsel. Do you take me?

Gla. Deuce take me if I do!

Beau. Blockhead!—it's as clear as a map. What if we could make this elegant clown pass himself off as a foreign prince?—lend him money, clothes, equipage for the purpose?—make him propose to Pauline?—marry Pauline? Would it not be delicious?

Gla. Ha, ha!—Excellent! But how shall we support the necessary expenses of his highness?

Beau. Pshaw! Revenge is worth a much larger sacrifice than a few hundred louis;—as for details, my valet is the trustiest fellow in the world, and shall have the appointment of his highness's establishment. Let's go to him at once, and see if he be really this Admirable Crichton.

Gla. With all my heart;—but the dinner?

Beau. Always thinking of dinner! Hark ye, landlord; how far is it to young Melnotte's cottage? I should like to see such a prodigy.

Land. Turn down the lane,—then strike across the common,—and you will see his mother's cottage.

Beau. True, he lives with his mother.—[*Aside.*] We will not trust to an old woman's discretion; better send for him hither. I'll just step in and write him a note. Come, Glavis.

Gla. Yes,—Beauseant, Glavis, and Co., manufacturers

of princes, wholesale and retail,—an uncommonly genteel line of business. But why so grave ?

Beau. You think only of the sport,—I of the revenge.

[*Exeunt within the Inn.*]

SCENE III.

The interior of MELNOTTE'S cottage ; flowers placed here and there ; a guitar on an oaken table, with a portfolio, &c. ; a picture on an easel, covered by a curtain ; fencing-foils crossed over the mantelpiece ; an attempt at refinement in spite of the homeliness of the furniture, &c. ; a staircase to the right conducts to the upper story.

[*Shout without.*] “Long live Claude Melnotte !” “Long live the Prince !”

The Widow Mel. Hark !—there's my dear son ;—carried off the prize, I'm sure ; and now he'll want to treat them all.

Claude Mel. [*opening the door*]. What ! you will not come in, my friends ! Well, well,—there's a trifle to make merry elsewhere. Good day to you all,—good day !

[*Shout.*] “Hurrah ! Long live Prince Claude !”

Enter CLAUDE MELNOTTE, with a rifle in his hand.

Mel. Give me joy, dear mother !—I've won the prize !—never missed one shot ! Is it not handsome, this gun ?

Widow. Humph !—Well, what is it worth, Claude ?

Mel. Worth ! What is a riband worth to a soldier ? Worth ! everything ! Glory is priceless !

Widow. Leave glory to great folks. Ah ! Claude, Claude, castles in the air cost a vast deal to keep up ! How is all this to end ? What good does it do thee to learn Latin, and sing songs, and play on the guitar, and fence, and dance, and paint pictures ? All very fine ; but what does it bring in ?

Mel. Wealth ! wealth, my mother ! Wealth to the mind—wealth to the heart—high thoughts—bright dreams—the hope of fame—the ambition to be worthier to love Pauline.

Widow. My poor son !—The young lady will never think of thee.

Mel. Do the stars think of us ? Yet if the prisoner see them shine into his dungeon, wouldst thou bid him turn

away from *their* lustre? Even so from this low cell, poverty, I lift my eyes to Pauline and forget my chains. — [*Goes to the picture and draws aside the curtain.*] See, this is her image—painted from memory. Oh, how the canvas wrongs her!— [*Takes up the brush and throws it aside.*] I shall never be a painter! I can paint no likeness but one, and that is above all art. I would turn soldier—France needs soldiers! But to leave the air that Pauline breathes! What is the hour?—so late? I will tell thee a secret, mother. Thou knowest that for the last six weeks I have sent every day the rarest flowers to Pauline?—she wears them. I have seen them on her breast. Ah, and then the whole universe seemed filled with odours! I have now grown more bold—I have poured my worship into poetry—I have sent the verses to Pauline—I have signed them with my own name. My messenger ought to be back by this time. I bade him wait for the answer.

Widow. And what answer do you expect, Claude?

Mel. That which the Queen of Navarre sent to the poor troubadour:—"Let me see the Oracle that can tell nations I am beautiful!" She will admit me. I shall hear her speak—I shall meet her eyes—I shall read upon her cheek the sweet thoughts that translate themselves into blushes. Then—then, oh, then—she may forget that I am the peasant's son!

Widow. Nay, if she will but hear thee talk, Claude?

Mel. I foresee it all. She will tell me that desert is the true rank. She will give me a badge—a flower—a glove! Oh rapture! I shall join the armies of the republic—I shall rise—I shall win a name that beauty will not blush to hear. I shall return with the right to say to her—"See, how love does not level the proud, but raise the humble!" Oh, how my heart swells within me!—Oh, what glorious prophets of the future are youth and hope!

[*Knock at the door.*]

Widow. Come in.

Enter GASPAR.

Mel. Welcome, Gaspar, welcome. Where is the letter? Why do you turn away, man? where is the letter? [*GASPAR gives him one.*] This! This is mine, the one I intrusted to thee. Didst thou not leave it?

Gaspar. Yes, I left it.

Mel. My own verses returned to me. Nothing else!

Gaspar. Thou wilt be proud to hear how thy messenger was honoured. For thy sake, Melnotte, I have borne that which no Frenchman can bear without disgrace.

Mel. Disgrace, Gaspar! Disgrace?

Gaspar. I gave thy letter to the porter, who passed it from lackey to lackey till it reached the lady it was meant for.

Mel. It reached her, then ;—you are sure of that ! It reached her,—well, well!

Gaspar. It reached her, and was returned to me with blows. Dost hear, Melnotte? with blows! Death! are we slaves still, that we are to be thus dealt with, we peasants?

Mel. With blows? No, Gaspar, no; not blows!

Gaspar. I could show thee the marks if it were not so deep a shame to bear them. The lackey who tossed thy letter into the mire swore that his lady and her mother never were so insulted. What could thy letter contain, Claude?

Mel. [*looking over the letter*]. Not a line that a serf might not have written to an empress. No, not one.

Gaspar. They promise thee the same greeting they gave me, if thou wilt pass that way. Shall we endure this, Claude?

Mel. [*wringing GASPAR'S hand*]. Forgive me, the fault was mine, I have brought this on thee; I will not forget it; thou shalt be avenged! The heartless insolence!

Gaspar. Thou art moved, Melnotte; think not of me; I would go through fire and water to serve thee; but,—a blow! It is not the *bruise* that galls,—it is the *blush*, Melnotte.

Mel. Say, what message?—How insulted!—Wherefore?—What the offence?

Gaspar. Did you not write to Pauline Deschappelles, the daughter of the rich merchant?

Mel. Well?—

Gaspar. And are you not a peasant—a gardener's son?—that was the offence. Sleep on it, Melnotte. Blows to a French citizen, blows! [*Exit.*]

Widow. Now you are cured, Claude!

Mel. [*tearing the letter*]. So do I scatter her image to the

winds—I will stop her in the open streets—I will insult her—I will beat her menial ruffians—I will—— [*Turns suddenly to Widow.*] Mother, am I humpbacked—deformed—hideous?

Widow. You!

Mel. A coward—a thief—a liar?

Widow. You!

Mel. Or a dull fool—a vain, drivelling, brainless idiot?

Widow. No, no.

Mel. What am I then—worse than all these? Why, I am a peasant! What has a peasant to do with love? Vain revolutions, why lavish your cruelty on the great? Oh that we—we, the hewers of wood and drawers of water—had been swept away, so that the proud might learn what the world would be without us! [*Knock at the door.*]

Enter Servant from the Inn.

Servant. A letter for Citizen Melnotte.

Mel. A letter! from her perhaps—who sent thee?

Servant. Why, Monsieur—I mean Citizen—Beauseant, who stops to dine at the Golden Lion, on his way to his château.

Mel. Beausseant!—[*Reads.*]

“Young man, I know thy secret—thou lovest above thy station: if thou hast wit, courage, and discretion, I can secure to thee the realization of thy most sanguine hopes; and the sole condition I ask in return is, that thou shalt be steadfast to thine own ends. I shall demand from thee a solemn oath to marry her whom thou lovest; to bear her to thine home on thy wedding night. I am serious—if thou wouldst learn more, lose not a moment, but follow the bearer of this letter to thy friend and patron,—CHARLES BEAUSEANT.”

Mel. Can I believe my eyes? Are our own passions the sorcerers that raise up for us spirits of good or evil? I will go instantly.

Widow. What is this, Claude?

Mel. “Marry her whom thou lovest”—“bear her to thine own home.”—Oh, revenge and love; which of you is the stronger?—[*Gazing on the picture.*] Sweet face, thou smilest on me from the canvas: weak fool that I am, do I

then love her still? No, it is the vision of my own romance that I have worshipped : it is the reality to which I bring scorn for scorn. Adieu, mother : I will return anon. My brain reels—the earth swims before me.—*[Looks again at the letter.]* No, it is *not* a mockery ; I do *not* dream !

[Exit.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

The gardens of M. DESCHAPPELLES' house at Lyons—the house seen at the back of the stage.

Enter BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.

Beau. Well, what think you of my plot? Has it not succeeded to a miracle? The instant that I introduced his Highness the Prince of Como to the pompous mother and the scornful daughter, it was all over with them: he came—he saw—he conquered: and, though it is not many days since he arrived, they have already promised him the hand of Pauline.

Gla. It is lucky, though, that you told them his highness travelled incognito, for fear the Directory (who are not very fond of princes) should lay him by the heels; for he has a wonderful wish to keep up his rank, and scatters our gold about with as much coolness as if he were watering his own flower-pots.

Beau. True, he is damnably extravagant; I think the sly dog does it out of malice. However, it must be owned that he reflects credit on his loyal subjects, and makes a very pretty figure in his fine clothes, with my diamond snuff-box.

Gla. And my diamond ring! But do you think he will be firm to the last? I fancy I see symptoms of relenting: he will never keep up his rank, if he once let out his conscience.

Beau. His oath binds him! he cannot retract without being forsworn, and those low fellows are always superstitious! But, as it is, I tremble lest he be discovered: that bluff Colonel Damas (Madame Deschappelles' cousin) evidently suspects him: we must make haste and conclude the farce: I have thought of a plan to end it this very day.

Gla. This very day! Poor Pauline: her dream will be soon over.

Beau. Yes, this day they shall be married; this evening, according to his oath, he shall carry his bride to the Golden

Lion, and then pomp, equipage, retinue, and title, all shall vanish at once ; and her Highness the Princess shall find that she has refused the son of a Marquis, to marry the son of a gardener.—Oh, Pauline ! once loved, now hated, yet still not relinquished, thou shalt drain the cup to the dregs, —thou shalt know what it is to be humbled !

Enter from the house, MELNOTTE, as the Prince of Como, leading in PAULINE ; MADAME DESCHAPELLES, fanning herself ; and COLONEL DAMAS.

[BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS bow respectfully. PAULINE and MELNOTTE walk apart.]

Mme. Deschap. Good morning, gentlemen ; really I am so fatigued with laughter ; the dear Prince is so entertaining. What wit he has ! Any one may see that he has spent his whole life in courts.

Damas. And what the deuce do you know about courts, cousin Deschappelles ? You women regard men just as you buy books—you never care about what is in them, but how they are bound and lettered. 'Sdeath, I don't think you would even look at your Bible if it had not a title to it.

Mme. Deschap. How coarse you are, cousin Damas !—quite the manners of a barrack—you don't deserve to be one of our family ; really we must drop your acquaintance when Pauline marries. I cannot patronize any relations that would discredit my future son-in-law, the Prince of Como.

Mel. [*advancing*]. These are beautiful gardens, madame, (BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS retire)—who planned them ?

Mme. Deschap. A gardener named Melnotte, your highness—an honest man who knew his station. I can't say as much for his son—a presuming fellow, who,—ha ! ha ! actually wrote verses—such doggerel !—to my daughter.

Pauline. Yes, how you would have laughed at them, Prince !—*you*, who write such beautiful verses !

Mel. This Melnotte must be a monstrous impudent person !

Damas. Is he good-looking ?

Mme. Deschap. I never notice such *canaille*—an ugly, mean-looking clown, if I remember right.

Damas. Yet I heard your porter say he was wonderfully like his highness.

Mel. [*taking snuff*]. You are complimentary.

Mme. Deschap. For shame, cousin Damas!—like the Prince, indeed!

Pauline. Like you! Ah, mother, like our beautiful prince! I'll never speak to you again, cousin Damas.

Mel. [*aside*]. Humph!—rank is a great beautifier! I never passed for an Apollo while I was a peasant; if I am so handsome as a prince, what should I be as an emperor! [*Aloud.*] Monsieur Beauseant, will you honour me?

[*Offers snuff.*]

Beau. No, your highness; I have no small vices.

Mel. Nay, if it were a vice, you'd be sure to have it, Monsieur Beauseant.

Mme. Deschap. Ha! ha!—how very severe!—what wit!

Beau. [*in a rage and aside*]. Curse his impertinence!

Mme. Deschap. What a superb snuff-box!

Pauline. And what a beautiful ring!

Mel. You like the box—a trifle—interesting perhaps from associations—a present from Louis XIV. to my great-grandmother. Honour me by accepting it.

Beau. [*plucking him by the sleeve*]. How!—what the devil! My box—are you mad? It is worth five hundred louis.

Mel. [*unheeding him, and turning to PAULINE*]. And you like this ring? Ah, it has, indeed a lustre since your eyes have shone on it [*placing it on her finger*]. Henceforth hold me, sweet enchantress, the Slave of the Ring.

Gla. [*pulling him*]. Stay, stay—what are you about? My maiden aunt's legacy—a diamond of the first water. You shall be hanged for swindling, sir.

Mel. [*pretending not to hear*]. It is curious, this ring; it is the one with which my grandfather, the Doge of Venice, married the Adriatic!

[*MADAME and PAULINE examine the ring.*]

Mel. [*to BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS*]. Fie, gentlemen! princes must be generous?—[*Turns to DAMAS, who watches them closely.*] These kind friends have my interest so much at heart, that they are as careful of my property as if it were their own!

Beau. and Gla. [*confusedly*]. Ha! ha!—very good joke that!

[*Appear to remonstrate with MELNOTTE in dumb show.*]

Damas. What's all that whispering? I am sure there is some juggle here: hang me, if I think he is an Italian after all. Gad, I'll try him. *Servitore umillissimo, Eccellenza.**

Mel. Hum—what does he mean, I wonder?

Damas. Godo di vedervi in buona salute.†

Mel. Hem—hem!

Damas. Fa bel tempo—che si dice di nuovo? ‡

Mel. Well, sir, what's all that gibberish?

Damas. Oh, oh!—only Italian, your highness!—The Prince of Como does not understand his own language!

Mel. Not as you pronounce it; who the deuce could?

Mme. Deschap. Ha! ha! cousin Damas, never pretend to what you don't know.

Pauline. Ha! ha! cousin Damas; you speak Italian, indeed! [*Makes a mocking gesture at him.*]

Beau. [*to GLAVIS*]. Clever dog!—how ready!

Gla. Ready, yes; with my diamond ring!—Damn his readiness!

Damas. Laugh at me!—laugh at a Colonel in the French army!—the fellow's an impostor; I know he is. I'll see if he understands fighting as well as he does Italian.—[*Goes up to him, and aside.*] Sir, you are a jackanapes.—Can you construe that?

Mel. No, sir; I never construe affronts in the presence of ladies; by-and-by I shall be happy to take a lesson—or give one.

Damas. I'll find the occasion, never fear!

Mme. Deschap. Where are you going, cousin?

Damas. To correct my Italian.

[*Exit.*]

Beau. [*to GLAVIS*]. Let us after, and pacify him; he evidently suspects something.

Gla. Yes!—but my diamond ring!

Beau. And my box!—We are over-taxed fellow-subjects!—we must stop the supplies, and dethrone the prince.

Gla. Prince!—he ought to be heir-apparent to King Stork.

[*Exeunt BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.*]

Mme. Deschap. Dar eI ask your highness to forgive my cousin's insufferable vulgarity?

* Your Excellency's most humble servant.

† I am glad to see you in good health.

‡ Fine weather. What news is there?

Pauline. Oh yes!—you will forgive his manner for the sake of his heart.

Mel. And the sake of his cousin.—Ah, madam, there is one comfort in rank,—we are so sure of our position that we are not easily affronted. Besides, M. Damas has bought the right of indulgence from his friends, by never showing it to his enemies.

Pauline. Ah! he is, indeed, as brave in action as he is rude in speech. He rose from the ranks to his present grade, and in two years!

Mel. In two years!—two years, did you say?

Mme. Deschap. [*aside*]. I don't like leaving girls alone with their lovers; but, with a prince, it would be so ill-bred to be prudish. [*Exit.*]

Mel. You can be proud of your connection with one who owes his position to merit—not birth.

Pauline. Why, yes; but still—

Mel. Still what, Pauline!

Pauline. There is something glorious in the heritage of command. A man who has ancestors is like a representative of the past.

Mel. True; but, like other representatives, nine times out of ten he is a silent member. Ah, Pauline! not to the past, but to the future, looks true nobility, and finds its blazon in posterity.

Pauline. You say this to please me, who have no ancestors; but you, prince, must be proud of so illustrious a race!

Mel. No, no! I would not, were I fifty times a prince, be a pensioner on the dead! I honour birth and ancestry when they are regarded as the incentives to exertion, not the title-deeds to sloth! I honour the laurels that overshadow the graves of our fathers;—it is our fathers I emulate, when I desire that beneath the evergreen I myself have planted, my own ashes may repose! Dearest! couldst thou but see with my eyes!

Pauline. I cannot forego pride when I look on thee, and think that thou lovest me. Sweet Prince, tell me again of thy palace by the Lake of Como; it is so pleasant to hear of thy splendours since thou didst swear to me that they would be desolate without Pauline; and when thou describest them, it is with a mocking lip and a noble scorn, as if custom had made thee disdain greatness.

Mel. Nay, dearest, nay, if thou wouldst have me paint
 The home to which, could love fulfil its prayers,
 This hand would lead thee, listen !*—A deep vale
 Shut out by Alpine hills from the rude world ;
 Near a clear lake, margin'd by fruits of gold
 And whispering myrtles ; glassing softest skies,
 As cloudless, save with rare and roseate shadows,
 As I would have thy fate !

Pauline.

My own dear love !

Mel. A palace lifting to eternal summer
 Its marble walls, from out a glossy bower
 Of coolest foliage musical with birds,
 Whose songs should syllable thy name ! At noon
 We'd sit beneath the arching vines, and wonder
 Why Earth could be unhappy, while the Heavens
 Still left us youth and love ! We'd have no friends
 That were not lovers ; no ambition, save
 To excel them all in love ; we'd read no books
 That were not tales of love—that we might smile
 To think how poorly eloquence of words
 Translates the poetry of hearts like ours !
 And when night came, amidst the breathless Heavens
 We'd guess what star should be our home when love
 Becomes immortal ; while the perfumed light
 Stole through the mists of alabaster lamps,
 And every air was heavy with the sighs
 Of orange-groves and music from sweet lutes,
 And murmurs of low fountains that gush forth
 I' the midst of roses !—Dost thou like the picture ?

Pauline. Oh, as the bee upon the flower, I hang
 Upon the honey of thy eloquent tongue !
 Am I not blest ? And if I love too wildly,
 Who would not love thee like Pauline ?

* The reader will observe that Melnotte evades the request of Pauline. He proceeds to describe a home, which he does not say he possesses, but to which he would lead her, "*could Love fulfil its prayers.*" This caution is intended as a reply to a sagacious critic who censures the description, because it is not an exact and prosaic inventory of the characteristics of the Lake of Como !—When Melnotte, for instance, talks of birds "that syllable the name of Pauline" (by the way, a literal translation from an Italian poet), he is not thinking of ornithology, but probably of the Arabian Nights. He is venting the extravagant, but natural, enthusiasm of the poet and the lover.

Mel. [*bitterly*]. Oh, false one!
It is the *prince* thou lovest, not the *man* :
If in the stead of luxury, pomp, and power,
I had painted poverty, and toil, and care,
Thou hadst found no honey on my tongue;—*Pauline*,
That is not love!

Pauline. Thou wrong'st me, cruel Prince!
At first, in truth, I might not have been won,
Save through the weakness of a flatter'd pride;
But *now*,—oh! trust me,—couldst thou fall from power
And sink——

Mel. As low as that poor gardener's son
Who dared to lift his eyes to thee?—

Pauline. Even then,
Methinks thou wouldst be only made more dear
By the sweet thought that I could prove how deep
Is woman's love! We are like the insects, caught
By the poor glittering of a garish flame;
But, oh, the wings once scorch'd, the brightest star
Lures us no more; and by the fatal light
We cling till death!

Mel. Angel!
[*Aside.*] O conscience! conscience!
It must not be;—her love hath grown a torture
Worse than her hate. I will at once to Beauscant,
And—ha! he comes. Sweet love, one moment leave me.
I have business with these gentlemen—I—I
Will forthwith join you.

Pauline. Do not tarry long! [*Exit.*]

Enter BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.

Mel. Release me from my oath,—I will not marry her!

Beau. Then thou art perjured.

Mel. No, I was not in my senses when I swore to thee
to marry her! I was blind to all but her scorn!—deaf to
all but my passion and my rage! Give me back my
poverty and my honour!

Beau. It is too late,—you must marry her! and this day.
I have a story already coined, and sure to pass current.
This Damas suspects thee,—he will set the police to work!
—thou wilt be detected—*Pauline* will despise and execrate
thee. Thou wilt be sent to the common gaol as a swindler.

Mel. Fiend !

Beau. And in the heat of the girl's resentment (you know of what resentment is capable), and the parents' shame, she will be induced to marry the first that offers—even perhaps your humble servant.

Mel. You ! No ; that were worse—for thou hast no mercy ! I will marry her—I will keep my oath. Quick, then, with the damnable invention thou art hatching ;—quick, if thou wouldst not have me strangle thee or myself.

Gla. What a tiger ! Too fierce for a prince ;—he ought to have been the Grand Turk.

Beau. Enough—I will dispatch ; be prepared.

[*Exeunt BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.*]

Enter DAMAS with two swords.

Damas. Now, then, sir, the ladies are no longer your excuse. I have brought you a couple of dictionaries ; let us see if your highness can find out the Latin for *bilbo*.

Mel. Away, sir ! I am in no humour for jesting.

Damas. I see you understand something of the grammar ; you decline the noun-substantive “small-sword” with great ease ; but that won't do—you must take a lesson in *parsing*.

Mel. Fool !

Damas. Sir, as sons take after their mother, so the man who calls me a fool insults the lady who bore me ; there's no escape for you—fight you shall, or——

Mel. Oh, enough ! enough !—take your ground.

[*They fight ; DAMAS is disarmed. MELNOTTE takes up the sword and returns it to DAMAS respectfully.*]

A just punishment to the brave soldier who robs the State of its best property—the sole right to his valour and his life.

Damas. Sir, you fence exceedingly well ; you must be a man of honour—I don't care a jot whether you are a prince ; but a man who has *carte* and *tierce* at his fingers' ends must be a gentleman.

Mel. [*aside*]. Gentleman ! Ay, I was a gentleman before I turned conspirator ; for honest men are the

gentlemen of Nature! Colonel, they tell me you rose from the ranks.

Damas. I did.

Mel. And in two years!

Damas. It is true; that's no wonder in our army at present. Why the oldest general in the service is scarcely thirty, and we have some of two-and-twenty.

Mel. Two-and-twenty!

Damas. Yes; in the French army, now a days, promotion is not a matter of purchase. We are all heroes, because we may be all generals. We have no fear of the cypress, because we may all hope for the laurel.

Mel. A general at two-and-twenty! [*turning away*]
Sir, I may ask you a favour one of these days.

Damas. Sir, I shall be proud to grant it. It is astonishing how much I like a man after I've fought with him.

[*Hides the sword.*]

Enter MADAME DESCHAPPELLES and BEAUSEANT.

Mme. Deschap. Oh, prince,—prince!—What do I hear? You must fly—you must quit us!

Mel. I!—

Beau. Yes, prince: read this letter, just received from my friend at Paris, one of the Directory; they suspect you of designs against the Republic: they are very suspicious of princes, and your family take part with the Austrians. Knowing that I introduced your highness at Lyons, my friend writes to me to say that you must quit the town immediately, or you will be arrested,—thrown into prison, perhaps guillotined! Fly!—I will order horses to your carriage instantly. Fly to Marseilles; there you can take ship to Leghorn.

Mme. Deschap. And what's to become of Pauline? Am I not to be mother to a princess, after all?

Enter PAULINE and MONSIEUR DESCHAPPELLES.

Pauline [*throwing herself into MELNOTTE's arms.*] You must leave us!—Leave Pauline!

Beau. Not a moment is to be wasted.

M. Deschap. I will go to the magistrates and inquire—

Beau. Then he is lost; the magistrates, hearing he is suspected, will order his arrest.

Mme. Deschap. And I shall not be a princess-dowager!

Beau. Why not ? There is only one thing to be done :—send for the priest—let the marriage take place at once, and the prince carry home a bride ?

Mel. Impossible !—[*Aside.*] Villain.

Mme. Deschap. What, lose my child ?

Beau. And gain a princess !

Mme. Deschap. Oh, Monsieur Beauseant, you are so very kind, it must be so,—we ought not to be selfish, my daughter's happiness at stake. She will go away, too, in a carriage and six !

Pauline. Thou art here still,—I cannot part from thee,—my heart will break.

Mel. But thou wilt not consent to this hasty union ?—thou wilt not wed an outcast—a fugitive ?

Pauline. Ah ! if thou art in danger, who should share it but Pauline ?

Mel. [*aside*]. Distraction !—If the earth could swallow me !

M. Deschap. Gently ! gently ! The settlements—the contracts—my daughter's dowry !

Mel. The dowry !—I am not base enough for that ; no, not one farthing !

Beau. [*to MADAM*]. Noble fellow !—Really your good husband is too mercantile in these matters. Monsieur Deschappelles, you hear his highness : we can arrange the settlements by proxy ; 'tis the way with people of quality.

M. Deschap. But—

Mme. Deschap. Hold your tongue !—Don't expose yourself !

Beau. I will bring the priest in a trice. Go in all of you and prepare ; the carriage shall be at the door before the ceremony is over.

Mme. Deschap. Be sure there are six horses, Beauseant ! You are very good to have forgiven us for refusing you ; but you see—a prince !

Beau. And such a prince ! Madam, I cannot blush at the success of so illustrious a rival.—[*Aside.*] Now will I follow them to the village, enjoy my triumph, and to-morrow, in the hour of thy shame and grief, I think, proud girl, thou wilt prefer even these arms to those of the gardener's son.

[*Exit.*]

Mme. Deschap. Come, Monsieur Deschappelles, give your arm to her highness that is to be.

M. Deschap. I don't like doing business in such a hurry; 'tis not the way with the house of Deschappelles & Co.

Mme. Deschap. There, now, you fancy you are in the counting-house, don't you? [*Pushes him to PAULINE.*]

Mel. Stay, stay, Pauline—one word. Have you no scruple, no fear? Speak—it is not yet too late.

Pauline. When I loved thee, thy fate became mine. Triumph or danger—joy or sorrow—I am by thy side.

Damas. Well, well, prince, thou art a lucky man to be so loved. She is a good little girl in spite of her foibles—make her as happy as if she were not to be a princess [*slapping him on the shoulder*]. Come, sir, I wish you joy—young—tender—lovely;—zounds, I envy you!

Mel. [*who has stood apart in gloomy abstraction*]. Do you? *

* On the stage the following lines are added :—

“Do you? Wise judges are we of each other.
‘Woo, wed, and bear her home!’ So runs the bond
To which I sold myself,—and then—what then?
Away?—I will not look beyond the hour.
Like children in the dark, I dare not face
The shades that gather round me in the distance.
You envy me—I thank you—you may read
My joy upon my brow—I thank you, sir!
If hearts had audible language, you would hear
What mine would answer when you talk of *envy*!”

ACT III.—SCENE I.

The exterior of the Golden Lion—time, twilight. The moon rises during the scene.

Enter Landlord and his Daughter from the Inn.

Land. Ha—ha—ha! Well, I never shall get over it. Our Claude is a prince with a vengeance now. His carriage breaks down at my inn—ha—ha!

Janet. And what airs the young lady gives herself! “Is this the best room you have, young woman?” with such a toss of the head.

Land. Well, get in, Janet: get in and see to the supper: the servants must sup before they go back. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.

Beau. You see our princess is lodged at last—one stage more, and she’ll be at her journey’s end—the beautiful palace at the foot of the Alps!—ha—ha!

Gla. Faith, I pity the poor Pauline—especially if she’s going to sup at the Golden Lion [*makes a wry face*]. I shall never forget that cursed ragout.

Enter MELNOTTE from the Inn.

Beau. Your servant, my prince; you reigned most worthily. I condole with you on your abdication. I am afraid that your highness’s retinue are not very faithful servants. I think they will quit you in the moment of your fall—’tis the fate of greatness. But you are welcome to your fine clothes—also the diamond snuff-box, which Louis XIV. gave to your great-great-grandmother.

Gla. And the ring, with which your grandfather the Doge of Venice married the Adriatic.

Mel. I have kept my oath, gentlemen—say, have I kept my oath?

Beau. Most religiously.

Mel. Then you have done with me and mine—away with you!

Beau. How, knave?

Mel. Look you, our bond is over. Proud conquerors that we are, we have won the victory over a simple girl—compromised her honour—embittered her life—blasted, in their very blossoms, all the flowers of her youth. This is your triumph,—it is my shame! [*Turns to BEAUSEANT.*] Enjoy thy triumph, but not in my sight. I *was* her betrayer—I *am* her protector! Cross but her path—one word of scorn, one look of insult—nay, but one quiver of that mocking lip, and I will teach thee that bitter word thou hast graven eternally in this heart—*Repentance!*

Beau. His highness is most grandiloquent.

Mel. Highness me no more! Beware! Remorse has made me a new being. Away with you! There is danger in me. Away!

Gla. [*aside.*] He's an awkward fellow to deal with: come away, Beauseant.

Beau. I know the respect due to rank. Adieu, my prince. Any commands at Lyons? Yet hold—I promised you 200 louis on your wedding-day; here they are.

Mel. [*dashing the purse to the ground*]. I gave you revenge, I did not sell it. Take up your silver, Judas; take it.—Ay, it is fit you should learn to stoop.

Beau. You will beg my pardon for this some day. [*Aside to GLAVIS.*] Come to my château—I shall return hither to-morrow, to learn how Pauline likes her new dignity.

Mel. Are you not gone yet?

Beau. Your highness's most obedient, most faithful—

Gla. And most humble servants. Ha! ha!

[*Exeunt BEAUSEANT and GLAVIS.*]

Mel. Thank heaven I had no weapon, or I should have slain them. Wretch! what can I say? Where turn? On all sides mockery—the very boors within—[*Laughter from the Inn*].—'Sdeath, if even in this short absence the exposure should have chanced. I will call her. We will go hence. I have already sent one I can trust to my mother's house. There, at least, none can insult her agony—gloat upon her shame! There alone must she learn what a villain she has sworn to love.

[*As he turns to the door enter PAULINE from the Inn.*]

Pauline. Ah! my lord, what a place! I never saw such rude people. They stare and wink so. I think the very sight of a prince, though he travels *incognito*, turns their honest heads. What a pity the carriage should break down in such a spot! You are not well—the drops stand on your brow—your hand is feverish.

Mel. Nay, it is but a passing spasm ;—the air——

Pauline. Is not the soft air of your native south—
How pale he is!—indeed thou art not well.
Where are our people? I will call them.

Mel. Hold!

I—I am well.

Pauline. Thou art!—Ah! now I know it.
Thou fanciest, my kind lord—I know thou dost—
Thou fanciest these rude walls, these rustic gossips,
Brick'd floors, sour wine, coarse viands, vex Pauline;
And so they might, but thou art by my side,
And I forget all else.

Enter Landlord, the Servants peeping and laughing over his shoulder.

Land. My lord—your highness—
Will your most noble excellency choose—

Mel. Begone, sir! [*Exit Landlord laughing.*]

Pauline. How could they have learn'd thy rank?
One's servants are so vain!—nay, let it not
Chafe thee, sweet prince!—a few short days and we
Shall see thy palace by its lake of silver,
And—nay, nay, spendthrift, is thy wealth of smiles
Already drain'd, or dost thou play the miser?

Mel. Thine eyes would call up smiles in deserts, fair one.

Let us escape these rustics: close at hand
There is a cot, where I have bid prepare
Our evening lodgment—a rude, homely roof,
But honest, where our welcome will not be
Made torture by the vulgar eyes and tongues
That are as death to Love! A heavenly night!
The wooing air and the soft moon invite us.
Wilt walk? I pray thee, now,—I know the path,
Ay, every inch of it!

Pauline. What, *thou!* methought
Thou wert a stranger in these parts? Ah, truant,
Some village beauty lured thee;—thou art now
Grown constant?

Mel. Trust me.

Pauline. Princes are so changeful!

Mel. Come, dearest, come.

Pauline. Shall I not call our people

To light us?

Mel. Heaven will lend its stars for torches!

It is not far.

Pauline. The night breeze chills me.

Mel. Nay,

Let me thus mantle thee;—it is not cold.

Pauline. Never beneath thy smile!

Mel. [*aside.*] O Heaven! forgive me!
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

MELNOTTE'S cottage—Widow bustling about—a table spread for
supper.

Widow. So, I think that looks very neat. He sent me
a line, so blotted that I can scarcely read it, to say he
would be here almost immediately. She must have loved
him well indeed to have forgotten his birth; for though
he was introduced to her in disguise, he is too honourable
not to have revealed to her the artifice, which her love
only could forgive. Well, I do not wonder at it; for
though my son is not a prince, he ought to be one, and
that's almost as good. [*Knock at the door.*] Ah! here
they are.

Enter MELNOTTE and PAULINE.

Widow. Oh, my boy—the pride of my heart!—welcome,
welcome! I beg pardon, ma'am, but I do love him so!

Pauline. Good woman, I really—why prince, what is
this?—does the old lady know you? Oh, I guess, you
have done her some service. Another proof of your kind
heart? is it not?

Mel. Of my kind heart, ay !

Pauline. So you know the prince ?

Widow. Know him, madam ?—Ah, I begin to fear it is you who know him not !

Pauline. Do you think she is mad ? Can we stay here, my lord ? I think there's something very wild about her.

Mel. Madam, I—no, I cannot tell her ; my knees knock together : what a coward is a man who has lost his honour ! Speak to her—speak to her [*to his mother*]—tell her that—O Heaven, that I were dead !

Pauline. How confused he looks !—this strange place !—this woman—what can it mean ?—I half suspect—Who are you, madam !—who are you ? can't you speak ? are you struck dumb ?

Widow. Claude, you have not deceived her ?—Ah, shame upon you ! I thought that, before you went to the altar, she was to have known all.

Pauline. All ! what !—My blood freezes in my veins !

Widow. Poor lady !—dare I tell her, Claude ? [*MELNOTTE makes a sign of assent.*] Know you not then, madam, that this young man is of poor though honest parents ? Know you not that you are wedded to my son, Claude Melnotte ?

Pauline. Your son ! hold—hold ! do not speak to me.—[*Approaches MELNOTTE, and lays her hand on his arm.*] Is this a jest ? is it ? I know it is, only speak—one word—one look—one smile. I cannot believe—I who loved thee so—I cannot believe that thou art such a— No, I will not wrong thee by a harsh word—Speak !

Mel. Leave us—have pity on her, on me : leave us.

Widow. Oh, Claude, that I should live to see thee bowed by shame ! thee of whom I was so proud !

[*Exit by the staircase.*]

Pauline. Her son—her son !

Mel.

Now, lady, hear me.

Pauline.

Hear thee !

Ay, speak—her son ! have fiends a parent ? speak, That thou mayst silence curses—speak !

Mel.

No, curse me :

Thy curse would blast me less than thy forgiveness.

Pauline [*laughing wildly*]. “ This is thy palace, where the perfumed light

Steals through the mist of alabaster lamps,
And every air is heavy with the sighs
Of orange-groves, and music from sweet lutes,
And murmurs of low fountains, that gush forth
I' the midst of roses ! ” Dost thou like the picture ?
This is my bridal home, and thou my bridegroom.
O fool—O dupe—O wretch !—I see it all—
The by-word and the jeer of every tongue
In Lyons. Hast thou in thy heart one touch
Of human kindness ? if thou hast, why, kill me,
And save thy wife from madness. No, it cannot—
It cannot be : this is some horrid dream :
I shall wake soon.—[*Touching him.*] Art flesh ? art man ?
or but

The shadows seen in sleep ? It is too real.
What have I done to thee ? how sinn'd against thee,
That thou shouldst crush me thus ?

Mel.

Pauline, by pride

Angels have fallen ere thy time : by pride—
That sole alloy of thy most lovely mould—
The evil spirit of a bitter love,
And a revengeful heart, had power upon thee.
From my first years my soul was fill'd with thee :
I saw thee midst the flow'rs the lowly boy
Tended, unmark'd by thee—a spirit of bloom,
And joy, and freshness, as if Spring itself
Were made a living thing, and wore thy shape !
I saw thee, and the passionate heart of man
Enter'd the breast of the wild-dreaming boy.
And from that hour I grew—what to the last
I shall be—thine adorer ! Well, this love
Vain, frantic, guilty, if thou wilt, became
A fountain of ambition and bright hope ;
I thought of tales that by the winter hearth
Old gossips tell—how maidens sprung from kings
Have stoop'd from their high sphere ; how love, like death,
Levels all ranks, and lays the shepherd's crook
Beside the sceptre. Thus I made my home
In the soft palace of a fairy Future !
My father died ; and I, the peasant-born,
Was my own lord. Then did I seek to rise
Out of the prison of my mean estate ;

And, with such jewels as the exploring mind
 Brings from the caves of knowledge, buy my ransom
 From those twin gaolers of the daring heart—
 Low birth and iron fortune. Thy bright image
 Glass'd in my soul, took all the hues of glory,
 And lured me on to those inspiring toils
 By which man masters men ! For thee I grew
 A midnight student o'er the dreams of sages.
 For thee I sought to borrow from each grace,
 And every muse, such attributes as lend
 Ideal charms to love. I thought of thee,
 And passion taught me poesy—of thee,
 And on the painter's canvas grew the life
 Of beauty ! Art became the shadow
 Of the dear starlight of thy haunting eyes !
 Men call'd me vain—some mad—I heeded not ;
 But still toil'd on—hoped on—for it was sweet,
 If not to win, to feel more worthy thee ?

Pauline. Has he a magic to exorcise hate !

Mel. At last, in one mad hour, I dared to pour
 The thoughts that burst their channels into song,
 And sent them to thee—such a tribute, lady,
 As beauty rarely scorns, even from the meanest.
 The name—appended by the burning heart
 That long'd to show its idol what bright things
 It had created—yea, the enthusiast's name,
 That should have been thy triumph, was thy scorn !
 That very hour—when passion, turn'd to wrath,
 Resembled hatred most—when thy disdain
 Made my whole soul a chaos—in that hour
 The tempters found me a revengeful tool
 For their revenge ! Thou hadst trampled on the worm—
 It turn'd and stung thee !

Pauline.

Love, sir, hath no sting.

What was the slight of a poor powerless girl
 To the deep wrong of this most vile revenge ?
 Oh, how I loved this man !—a serf !—a slave !
Mel. Hold, lady ! No, not slave ! Despair is free !
 I will not tell thee of the throes—the struggles—
 The anguish—the remorse : No, let it pass !
 And let me come to such most poor atonement
Yet in my power. *Pauline !—*

[Approaching her with great emotion, and about to take her hand.]

Pauline.

No, touch me not!
I know my fate. You are, by law, my tyrant;
And I—O Heaven!—a peasant's wife! I'll work—
Toil—drudge—do what thou wilt—but touch me not;
Let my wrongs make me sacred!

Mel.

Do not fear me.
Thou dost not know me, madam: at the altar
My vengeance ceased—my guilty oath expired!
Henceforth, no image of some marble saint,
Niched in cathedral aisles, is hallow'd more
From the rude hand of sacrilegious wrong.
I am thy husband—nay, thou need'st not shudder;—
Here, at thy feet, I lay a husband's rights.
A marriage thus unholy—unfulfill'd—
A bond of fraud—is, by the laws of France,
Made void and null. To-night sleep—sleep in peace.
To-morrow, pure and virgin as this morn
I bore thee, bathed in blushes, from the shrine,
Thy father's arms shall take thee to thy home.
The law shall do thee justice, and restore
Thy right to bless another with thy love.
And when thou art happy, and hast half forgot
Him who so loved—so wrong'd thee, think at least
Heaven left some remnant of the angel still
In that poor peasant's nature!

Ho! my mother!

Enter Widow.

Conduct this lady—(she is not my wife;
She is our guest,—our honour'd guest, my mother)—
To the poor chamber, where the sleep of virtue,
Never, beneath my father's honest roof,
Ev'n villains dared to mar! Now, lady, now,
I think thou wilt believe me. Go, my mother!

Widow. She is not thy wife!

Mel.

Hush, hush! for mercy's sake!

Speak not, but go.

[Widow ascends the stairs; PAULINE follows weeping—turns to look back.]

Mel. [sinking down]. All angels bless and guard her!

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

The cottage as before—MELNOTTE seated before a table—writing implements, &c.—(Day breaking.)

Mel. Hush, hush!—she sleeps at last!—thank Heaven, for a while she forgets even that I live! Her sobs, which have gone to my heart the whole, long, desolate night, have ceased!—all calm—all still! I will go now; I will send this letter to Pauline's father: when he arrives, I will place in his hands my own consent to the divorce, and then, O France! my country! accept among thy protectors, thy defenders—the peasant's Son! Our country is less proud than custom, and does not refuse the blood, the heart, the right hand of the poor man.

Enter Widow.

Widow. My son, thou hast acted ill; but sin brings its own punishment. In the hour of thy remorse, it is not for a mother to reproach thee.

Mel. What is past is past. There is a future left to all men, who have the virtue to repent, and the energy to atone. Thou shalt be proud of thy son yet. Meanwhile, remember this poor lady has been grievously injured. For the sake of thy son's conscience, respect, honour, bear with her. If she weep, console—if she chide, be silent. 'Tis but a little while more—I shall send an express fast as horse can speed to her father. Farewell! I shall return shortly.

Widow. It is the only course left to thee—thou wert led astray, but thou art not hardened. Thy heart is right still, as ever it was when, in thy most ambitious hopes thou wert never ashamed of thy poor mother.

Mel. Ashamed of thee; No, if I yet endure, yet live, yet hope—it is only because I would not die till I have redeemed the noble heritage I have lost—the heritage I took unstained from thee and my dead father—a proud conscience and an honest name. I shall win them back yet—heaven bless you! [Exit.]

Widow. My dear Claude! How my heart bleeds for him.

[*PAULINE looks down from above, and after a pause descends.*

Pauline. Not here!—he spares me that pain at least: so far he is considerate—yet the place seems still more desolate without him. Oh, that I could hate him—the gardener's son!—and yet how nobly he—no—no—no I will not be so mean a thing as to forgive him!

Widow. Good morning, madam; I would have waited on you if I had known you were stirring.

Pauline. It is no matter, ma'am—your son's wife ought to wait on herself.

Widow. My son's wife—let not that thought vex you, madam—he tells me that you will have your divorce. And I hope I shall live to see him smile again. There are maidens in this village, young and fair, madam, who may yet console him.

Pauline. I dare say—they are very welcome—and when the divorce is got—he will marry again. I am sure I hope so. [Weeps.]

Widow. He could have married the richest girl in the province, if he had pleased it; but his head was turned, poor child! he could think of nothing but you. [Weeps.]

Pauline. Don't weep, mother.

Widow. Ah, he has behaved very ill, I know, but love is so headstrong in the young. Don't weep, madam.

Pauline. So, as you were saying—go on.

Widow. Oh, I cannot excuse him, ma'am—he was not in his right senses.

Pauline. But he always—always [*sobbing*] loved—loved me then?

Widow. He thought of nothing else. See here—he learnt to paint that he might take your likeness [*uncovers the picture*]. But that's all over now—I trust you have cured him of his folly;—but, dear heart, you have had no breakfast!

Pauline. I can't take anything—don't trouble yourself.

Widow. Nay, madam, be persuaded; a little coffee will refresh you. Our milk and eggs are excellent. I will get out Claude's coffee-cup—It is of real Sèvres; he saved up all his money to buy it three years ago, because the name of *Pauline* was inscribed on it.

Pauline. Three years ago ! Poor Claude !—Thank you ; I think I will have some coffee. Oh ! if he were but a poor gentleman, even a merchant : but a gardener's son—and what a home !—Oh no, it is too dreadful !

[*They seat themselves at the table, BEAUSEANT opens the lattice and looks in.*

Beau. So—so—the coast is clear ! I saw Claude in the lane—I shall have an excellent opportunity.

[*Shuts the lattice and knocks at the door.*

Pauline [*starting*]. Can it be my father ?—he has not sent for him yet ? No, he cannot be in such a hurry to get rid of me.

Widow. It is not time for your father to arrive yet ; it must be some neighbour.

Pauline. Don't admit any one.

[*Widow opens the door, BEAUSEANT pushes her aside and enters.*

Ha ! Heavens ! that hateful Beauseant ! This is indeed bitter !

Beau. Good morning, madam ! O widow, your son begs you will have the goodness to go to him in the village—he wants to speak to you on particular business ; you'll find him at the inn, or the grocer's shop, or the baker's, or at some other friend's of your family—make haste.

Pauline. Don't leave me, mother !—don't leave me.

Beau. [*with great respect*]. Be not alarmed, madam. Believe me your friend—your servant.

Pauline. Sir, I have no fear of you, even in this house ! Go, madam, if your son wishes it ; I will not contradict his commands whilst, at least, he has still the right to be obeyed.

Widow. I don't understand this ; however, I sha'n't be long gone.

[*Exit.*

Pauline. Sir, I divine the object of your visit—you wish to exult in the humiliation of one who humbled you. Be it so ; I am prepared to endure all—even your presence !

Beau. You mistake me, madam—Pauline, you mistake me ! I come to lay my fortune at your feet. You must already be disenchanted with this impostor ; these walls are not worthy to be hallowed by your beauty ! Shall that form be clasped in the arms of a base-born peasant ? Beloved, beautiful Pauline ! fly with me—my carriage waits

without—I will bear you to a home more meet for your reception. Wealth, luxury, station—all shall yet be yours. I forget your past disdain—I remember only your beauty and my unconquerable love!

Pauline. Sir! leave this house—it is humble: but a husband's roof, however lowly, is, in the eyes of God and man, the temple of a wife's honour! Know that I would rather starve—yes—with him who has betrayed me, than accept your lawful hand, even were you the prince whose name he bore!—Go.

Beau. What is not your pride humbled yet?

Pauline. Sir, what was pride in prosperity in affliction becomes virtue.

Beau. Look round: these rugged floors—these homely walls—this wretched struggle of poverty for comfort—think of this! and contrast with such a picture the refinement, the luxury, the pomp, that the wealthiest gentleman of Lyons offers to the loveliest lady. Ah, hear me!

Pauline. Oh! my father!—why did I leave you?—why am I thus friendless? Sir, you see before you a betrayed, injured, miserable woman!—respect her anguish!

[*MELNOTTE opens the door silently, and pauses at the threshold.*]

Beau. No! let me rather thus console it; let me snatch from those lips one breath of that fragrance which never should be wasted on the low churl thy husband.

Pauline. Help! Claude!—Claude!—Have I no protector?

Beau. Be silent! [*showing a pistol.*] See, I do not come unprepared even for violence. I will brave all things—thy husband and all his race—for thy sake. Thus, then, I clasp thee!

Mel. [*dashing him to the other end of the stage.*] *Pauline*—look up, *Pauline*! thou art safe.

Beau. [*levelling his pistol.*] Dare you thus insult a man of my birth, ruffian?

Pauline. Oh, spare him—spare my husband!—*Beauseant*—*Claude*—no—no [*faints*].

Mel. Miserable trickster! shame upon you! brave devices to terrify a woman! Coward!—you tremble—you have outraged the laws—you know that your weapon is harmless—you have the courage of the mountebank, not the bravo!—*Pauline*, there is no danger.

Beau. I wish thou wert a gentleman—as it is, thou art beneath me.—Good day, and a happy honeymoon.—*[Aside]*. I will not die till I am avenged. *[Exit.]*

Mel. I hold her in these arms—the last embrace!
Never, ah never more, shall this dear head
Be pillow'd on the heart that should have shelter'd
And has betray'd!—Soft—soft! one kiss—poor wretch!
No scorn on that pale lip forbids me now!
One kiss—so ends all record of my crime!
It is the seal upon the tomb of hope,
By which, like some lost, sorrowing angel, sits
Sad memory evermore;—she breathes—she moves—
She wakes to scorn, to hate, but not to shudder
Beneath the touch of my abhorred love.

[Places her on a seat.]

There—we are strangers now!

Pauline. All gone—all calm—
Is every thing a dream? thou art safe, unhurt—
I do not love thee;—but—but I am woman,
And—and—no blood is spilt?

Mel. No, lady, no;
My guilt hath not deserved so rich a blessing
As even danger in thy cause.

Enter WIDOW.

Widow. My son, I have been everywhere in search of you; why did you send for me?

Mel. I did not send for you.

Widow. No! but I must tell you your express has returned.

Mel. So soon! impossible!

Widow. Yes, he met the lady's father and mother on the road; they were going into the country on a visit. Your messenger says that Monsieur Deschappelles turned almost white with anger when he read your letter. They will be here almost immediately. Oh, Claude, Claude! what will they do to you? How I tremble! Ah, madam! do not let them injure him—if you knew how he doated on you.

Pauline. Injure him! no, ma'am, be not afraid;—my father! how shall I meet him? how go back to Lyons? the scoff of the whole city! Cruel, cruel, Claude *[in great agitation]*. Sir, you have acted most treacherously.

Mel. I know it, madam.

Pauline [*aside*]. If he would but ask me to forgive him!—I never can forgive you, sir.

Mel. I never dared to hope it.

Pauline. But you are my husband now, and I have sworn to—to love you, sir.

Mel. That was under a false belief, madam; Heaven and the laws will release you from your vow.

Pauline. He will drive me mad! if he were but less proud—if he would but ask me to remain—hark, hark—I hear the wheels of the carriage—Sir—Claude, they are coming; have you no word to say ere it is too late? Quick—speak.

Mel. I can only congratulate you on your release. Behold your parents!

Enter MONSIEUR and MADAME DESCHAPPELLES and COLONEL DAMAS.

M. Deschap. My child! my child!

Mme. Deschap. Oh, my poor Pauline!—what a villanous hovel this is! Old woman, get me a chair—I shall faint—I certainly shall. What will the world say? Child, you have been a fool. A mother's heart is easily broken.

Damas. Ha, ha! most noble Prince—I am sorry to see a man of your quality in such a condition; I am afraid your highness will go to the House of Correction.

Mel. Taunt on, sir; I spared *you* when you were unarmed—I am unarmed now. A man who has no excuse for crime is indeed defenceless!

Damas. There's something fine in the rascal, after all!

M. Deschap. Where is the impostor?—Are you thus shameless, traitor? Can you brave the presence of that girl's father?

Mel. Strike me, if it please you—you *are* her father.

Pauline. Sir—sir, for my sake;—whatever his guilt, he has acted nobly in atonement.

Mme. Deschap. Nobly! Are you mad, girl? I have no patience with you—to disgrace all your family thus!—Nobly! Oh you abominable, hardened, pitiful, mean, ugly villain!

Damas. Ugly! Why he was beautiful yesterday!

Pauline. Madame, this is his roof, and he is my hus-

band. Respect your daughter, or let blame fall alone on her.

Mme. Deschap. You—you—Oh, I'm choking.

M. Deschap. Sir, it were idle to waste reproach upon a conscience like yours—you renounce all pretensions to the person of this lady ?

Mel. I do. [*Gives a paper.*] Here is my consent to a divorce—my full confession of the fraud which annuls the marriage. Your daughter has been foully wronged—I grant it, sir ; but her own lips will tell you that, from the hour in which she crossed this threshold, I returned to my own station, and respected hers. Pure and inviolate, as when yesternorn you laid your hand upon her head, and blessed her, I yield her back to you. For myself—I deliver you for ever from my presence. An outcast and a criminal, I seek some distant land, where I may mourn my sin, and pray for your daughter's peace. Farewell—farewell to you all, for ever !

Widow. Claude, Claude, you will not leave your poor old mother ? *She* does not disown you in your sorrow—no, not even in your guilt. No divorce can separate a mother from her son.

Pauline. This poor widow teaches me my duty. No, mother,—no, for you are now *my* mother also !—nor should any law, human or divine, separate the wife from her husband's sorrows. Claude—Claude—all is forgotten—forgiven—I am thine for ever !

Mme. Deschap. What do I hear ?—Come away, or never see my face again.

M. Deschap. Pauline, *we* never betrayed you !—do you forsake us for him ?

Pauline [*going back to her father*]. Oh no—but you will forgive him too ; we will live together—he shall be your son.

M. Deschap. Never ! Cling to him and forsake your parents ! His home shall be yours—his fortune yours—his fate yours : the wealth I have acquired by honest industry shall never enrich the dishonest man.

Pauline. And you would have a wife enjoy luxury while a husband toils ! Claude, take me ; thou canst not give me wealth, titles, station—but thou canst give me a true heart. I will work for thee, tend thee, bear with thee, and *never, never* shall these lips reproach thee for the past.

Damas. I'll be hanged if I am not going to blubber !

Mel. This is the heaviest blow of all !—What a heart I have wronged !—Do not fear me, sir ; I am not all hardened—I will not rob her of a holier love than mine. Pauline !—angel of love and mercy !—your memory shall lead me back to virtue !—The husband of a being so beautiful in her noble and sublime tenderness may be poor—may be low-born ;—(there is no guilt in the decrees of providence !)—but he should be one who can look thee in the face without a blush,—to whom thy love does not bring remorse,—who can fold thee to his heart, and say,—“ *Here there is no deceit !* ”——I am not that man !

Damas [*aside to MELNOTTE*]. Thou art a noble fellow, notwithstanding ; and wouldst make an excellent soldier. Serve in my regiment. I have had a letter from the Directory—our young general takes the command of the army in Italy,—I am to join him at Marseilles,—I will depart this day, if thou wilt go with me.

Mel. It is the favour I would have asked thee, if I dared. Place me wherever a foe is most dreaded,—wherever France most needs a life !

Damas. There shall not be a forlorn hope without thee !

Mel. There is my hand !—mother, your blessing. I shall see you again,—a better man than a prince,—a man who has bought the right to high thoughts by brave deeds. And thou !—thou ! so wildly worshipped, so guiltily betrayed,—all is not yet lost !—for thy memory, at least, must be mine till death ! If I live, the name of him thou hast once loved shall not rest dishonoured ;—if I fall, amidst the carnage and the roar of battle, my soul will fly back to thee, and love shall share with death my last sigh !—More—more would I speak to thee !—to pray !—to bless ! But no ;—When I am less unworthy I will utter it to Heaven !—I cannot trust myself to ——[*turning to DESCHAPPELLES*] Your pardon, sir ; they are my last words—Farewell ! [*Exit.*]

Damas. I will go after him.—France will thank me for this.

Pauline [*starting from her father's arms*]. Claude !—
• Claude !—my husband !

M. Deschap. You have a father still !

ACT V.

Two years and a half from the date of Act IV.

SCENE I.

The Streets of Lyons.

Enter First, Second, and Third Officers.

First Officer. Well, here we are at Lyons, with gallant old Damas : it is his native place.

Second Officer. Yes ; he has gained a step in the army since he was here last. The Lyonnese ought to be very proud of stout General Damas.

Third Officer. Promotion is quick in the French army. This mysterious Morier,—the hero of Lodi, and the favourite of the commander-in-chief,—has risen to a colonel's rank in two years and a half.

Enter DAMAS, as a General.

Damas. Good morrow, gentlemen ; I hope you will amuse yourselves during our short stay at Lyons. It is a fine city : improved since I left it. Ah ! it is a pleasure to grow old,—when the years that bring decay to ourselves do but ripen the prosperity of our country. You have not met with Morier ?

First Officer. No : we were just speaking of him.

Second Officer. Pray, general, can you tell us who this Morier really is ?

Damas. Is !—why a colonel in the French army.

Third Officer. True. But what was he at first ?

Damas. At first ? Why a baby in long clothes, I suppose.

First Officer. Ha, ha ! Ever facetious, general.

Second Officer [*to Third*]. The general is sore upon this point ; you will only chafe him.—Any commands, general ?

Damas. None. Good day to you.

[*Exeunt Second and Third Officers.*]

Damas. Our comrades are very inquisitive. Poor Morier is the subject of a vast deal of curiosity.

First Officer. Say interest, rather, general. His constant melancholy, the loneliness of his habits,—his daring valour, his brilliant rise in the profession,—your friendship, and the favours of the commander-in-chief,—all tend to make him as much the matter of gossip as of admiration. But where is he, general? I have missed him all the morning.

Damas. Why, captain, I'll let you into a secret. My young friend has come with me to Lyons in hopes of finding a miracle.

First Officer. A miracle!

Damas. Yes, a miracle! in other words,—a constant woman.

First Officer. Oh! an affair of love!

Damas. Exactly so. No sooner did he enter Lyons than he waved his hand to me, threw himself from his horse, and is now, I warrant, asking every one who can know anything about the matter, whether a certain lady is still true to a certain gentleman!

First Officer. Success to him! and of that success there can be no doubt. The gallant Colonel Morier, the hero of Lodi, might make his choice out of the proudest families in France.

Damas. Oh, if pride be a recommendation, the lady and her mother are most handsomely endowed. By the way, captain, if you should chance to meet with Morier, tell him he will find me at the hotel.

First Officer. I will, general.

[*Exit.*

Damas. Now will I go to the Deschappelles, and make a report to my young Colonel. Ha! by Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, Virorum,—here comes Monsieur Beauseant!

Enter BEAUSEANT.

Good morrow, Monsieur Beauseant! How fares it with you?

Beau. [*aside*]. Damas! that is unfortunate;—if the Italian campaign should have filled his pockets, he may seek to baffle me in the moment of my victory. [*Aloud.*] Your servant, general,—for such, I think, is your new distinction! Just arrived in Lyons?

Damas. Not an hour ago. Well, how go on the Deschappelles? Have they forgiven you in that affair of

young Melnotte ? You had some hand in that notable device,—eh ?

Beau. Why, less than you think for ! The fellow imposed upon me. I have set it all right now. What has become of him ? He could not have joined the army, after all. There is no such name in the books.

Damas. I know nothing about Melnotte. As you say, I never heard the name in the Grand Army.

Beau. Hem !—You are not married, general ?

Damas. Do I look like a married man, sir ?—No, thank Heaven ! My profession is to make widows, not wives.

Beau. You must have gained much booty in Italy ! Pauline will be your heiress—eh ?

Damas. Booty ! Not I ! Heiress to what ? Two trunks and a portmanteau,—four horses,—three swords,—two suits of regimentals, and six pair of white leather inexpressibles ! A pretty fortune for a young lady !

Beau. [*aside*]. Then all is safe ! [*Aloud.*] Ha ! ha ! Is that really all your capital, General Damas ? Why, I thought Italy had been a second Mexico to you soldiers.

Damas. All a toss-up, sir. I was not one of the lucky ones ! My friend Morier, indeed, saved something handsome. But our commander-in-chief took care of him, and Morier is a thrifty, economical dog,—not like the rest of us soldiers, who spend our money as carelessly as if it were our blood.

Beau. Well, it is no matter ! I do not want fortune with Pauline. And you must know, General Damas, that your fair cousin has at length consented to reward my long and ardent attachment.

Damas. You !—the devil ! Why, she is already married ! There is no divorce !

Beau. True ; but this very day she is formally to authorise the necessary proceedings,—this very day she is to sign the contract that is to make her mine within one week from the day on which her present illegal marriage is annulled.

Damas. You tell me wonders !—Wonders ! No ; I believe anything of women !

Beau. I must wish you good morning.

[*As he is going, enter DESCHAPPELLES.*

M. Deschap. Oh, Beauseant! well met. Let us come to the notary at once.

Damas [*to Deschap.*]. Why, cousin!

M. Deschap. Damas, welcome to Lyons. Pray call on us; my wife will be delighted to see you.

Damas. Your wife be—blessed for her condescension! But [*taking him aside*] what do I hear? Is it possible that your daughter has consented to a divorce?—that she will marry Monsieur Beauseant?

M. Deschap. Certainly. What have you to say against it? A gentleman of birth, fortune, character. We are not so proud as we were; even my wife has had enough of nobility and princes!

Damas. But Pauline loved that young man so tenderly!

M. Deschap. [*taking snuff*]. That was two years and a half ago!

Damas. Very true. Poor Melnotte!

M. Deschap. But do not talk of that impostor; I hope he is dead or has left the country. Nay, even were he in Lyons at this moment, he ought to rejoice that, in an honourable and suitable alliance, my daughter may forget her sufferings and his crime.

Damas. Nay, if it be all settled, I have no more to say. Monsieur Beauseant informs me that the contract is to be signed this very day.

M. Deschap. It is; at one o'clock precisely. Will you be one of the witnesses?

Damas. I?—No; that is to say—yes, certainly!—at one o'clock I will wait on you.

M. Deschap. Till then, adieu—come Beauseant.

[*Exeunt BEAUSEANT and DESCHAPPELLES.*]

Damas. The man who sets his heart upon a woman
Is a chameleon, and doth feed on air;
From air he takes his colours—holds his life,—
Changes with every wind,—grows lean or fat,
Rosy with hope, or green with jealousy,
Or pallid with despair—just as the gale
Varies from north to south—from heat to cold!
Oh, woman! woman! thou shouldst have few sins
Of thine own to answer for! Thou art the author
Of such a book of follies in a man,

That it would need the tears of all the angels
To blot the record out !

Enter MELNOTTE, pale and agitated.

I need not tell thee ! Thou hast heard—

Mel.

The worst !

I have !

Damas. Be cheer'd ; others are fair as she is !

Mel. Others !—The world is crumbled at my feet !
She *was* my world ; fill'd up the whole of being—
Smiled in the sunshine—walk'd the glorious earth—
Sate in my heart—was the sweet life of life.
The Past was hers ; I dreamt not of a Future
That did not wear her shape ! Mem'ry and Hope
Alike are gone. Pauline is faithless ! Henceforth
The universal space is desolate !

Damas.

Hope yet.

Mel.

Hope, yes !—one hope is left me still—

A soldier's grave ! Glory has died with love.

I look into my heart, and, where I saw

Pauline, see Death !

[*After a pause*].—But am I not deceived ?

I went but by the rumour of the town ;

Rumour is false,—I was too hasty ! *Damas,*

Whom hast thou seen ?

Damas.

Thy rival and her father.

Arm thyself for the truth.—He heeds not—

Mel.

She

Will never know how deeply she was loved !

The charitable night, that wont to bring

Comfort to-day, in bright and eloquent dreams,

Is henceforth leagued with misery ! Sleep, farewell,

Or else become eternal ! Oh, the waking

From false oblivion, and to see the sun,

And know she is another's !—

Damas.

Be a man !

Mel. I am a man !—it is the sting of woe

Like mine that tells us we are men !

Damas.

The false one

Did not deserve thee.

Mel.

Hush !—No word against her !

Why should she keep, through years and silent absence,

The holy tablets of her virgin faith
True to a traitor's name! Oh, blame her not;
It were a sharper grief to think her worthless
Than to be what I am! To-day,—to-day!
They said "To-day!" This day, so wildly welcomed—
This day, my soul had singled out of time
And mark'd for bliss! This day! oh, could I see her,
See her once more unknown; but hear her voice.
So that one echo of its music might
Make ruin less appalling in its silence.

Damas. Easily done! Come with me to her house;
Your dress—your cloak—moustache—the bronzed hues
Of time and toil—the name you bear—belief
In your absence, all will ward away suspicion.
Keep in the shade. Ay, I would have you come.
There may be hope! Pauline is yet so young,
They may have forced her to these second bridal
Out of mistaken love.

Mel. No, bid me hope not!
Bid me not hope! I could not bear again
To fall from such a heaven! One gleam of sunshine,
And the ice breaks and I am lost! Oh, Damas,
There's no such thing as courage in a man;
The veriest slave that ever crawl'd from danger
Might spurn me now. When first I lost her, Damas,
I bore it, did I not? I still had hope,
And now I—I—

[Bursts into an agony of grief.]

Damas. What, comrade! all the women
That ever smiled destruction on brave hearts
Were not worth tears like these!

Mel. 'Tis past—forget it.
I am prepared; life has no further ills!
The cloud has broken in that stormy rain,
And on the waste I stand, alone with Heaven.

Damas. His very face is changed; a breaking heart
Does its work soon!—Come, Melnotte, rouse thyself:
One effort more. Again thou'lt see her.

Mel. See her!
There is a passion in that simple sentence
That shivers all the pride and power of reason
Into a chaos!

Damas. Time wanes ;—come, ere yet
It be too late.

Mel. Terrible words—"Too late!"
Lead on. One last look more, and then—

Damas. Forget her!

Mel. Forget her! yes—For death remembers not.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*A room in the house of MONSIEUR DESCHAPPELLES; PAULINE
seated in great dejection.*

Pauline. It is so, then. I must be false to Love,
Or sacrifice a father! Oh, my Claude,
My lover, and my husband! Have I lived
To pray that thou mayest find some fairer boon
Than the deep faith of this devoted heart,—
Nourish'd till now—now broken?

Enter MONSIEUR DESCHAPPELLES.

M. Deschap. My dear child,
How shall I thank—how bless thee? Thou hast saved,
I will not say my fortune—I could bear
Reverse, and shrink not—but that prouder wealth
Which merchants value most—my name, my credit—
The hard-won honours of a toilsome life:—
These thou hast saved, my child!

Pauline. Is there no hope?
No hope but this?

M. Deschap. None. If, without the sum
Which Beauseant offers for thy hand, this day
Sinks to the west—to-morrow brings our ruin!
And hundreds, mingled in that ruin, curse
The bankrupt merchant! and the insolvent herd
We feasted and made merry cry in scorn,
"How pride has fallen!—Lo, the bankrupt merchant!"
My daughter, thou hast saved us!

Pauline. And am lost!

M. Deschap. Come, let me hope that Beauseant's love—

Pauline. His love!
Talk not of love. Love has no thought of self!

Love buys not with the ruthless usurer's gold
The loathsome prostitution of a hand
Without a heart? Love sacrifices all things
To bless the thing it loves! *He* knows not love.
Father, his love is hate—his hope revenge!
My tears, my anguish, my remorse for falsehood—
These are the joys that he wrings from our despair!

M. Deschap. If thou deem'st thus, reject him! Shame
and ruin

Were better than thy misery;—think no more on't.
My sand is wellnigh run—what boots it when
The glass is broken? We'll annul the contract:
And if to-morrow in the prisoner's cell
These aged limbs are laid, why still, my child,
I'll think thou art spared; and wait the Liberal Hour
That lays the beggar by the side of kings!

Pauline. No—no—forgive me! You, my honour'd
father,—

You, who so loved, so cherish'd me, whose lips
Never knew one harsh word! I'm not ungrateful;
I am but human!—hush! Now, call the bridegroom—
You see I am prepared—no tears—all calm;
But, father, *talk no more of love!*

M. Deschap. My child,
'Tis but one struggle; he is young, rich, noble;
Thy state will rank first 'mid the dames of Lyons;
And when this heart can shelter thee no more,
Thy youth will not be guardianless.

Pauline. I have set
My foot upon the ploughshare—I will pass
The fiery ordeal. [*Aside.*] Merciful Heaven, support me!
And on the absent wanderer shed the light
Of happier stars—lost evermore to me!

*Enter MADAME DESCHAPPELLES, BEAUSEANT, GLAVIS,
and Notary.*

Mme. Deschap. Why, Pauline, you are quite in *déshabille*
—you ought to be more alive to the importance of this
joyful occasion. We had once looked higher, it is true;
but you see, after all, Monsieur Beauseant's father was a
Marquis, and that's a great comfort. Pedigree and jointure!—you have them both in Monsieur Beauseant. A

young lady decorously brought up should only have two considerations in her choice of a husband : first, is his birth honourable ? secondly, will his death be advantageous ? All other trifling details should be left to parental anxiety.

Beau. [*approaching and waving aside Madame*]. Ah, Pauline ! let me hope that you are reconciled to an event which confers such rapture upon me.

Pauline. I am reconciled to my doom.

Beau. Doom is a harsh word, sweet lady.

Pauline [*aside*]. This man must have some mercy—his heart cannot be marble. [*Aloud.*] Oh, sir, be just—be generous ! Seize a noble triumph—a great revenge ! Save the father, and spare the child.

Beau. [*aside*]. Joy—joy alike to my hatred and my passion ! The haughty Pauline is at last my suppliant. [*Aloud.*] You ask from me what I have not the sublime virtue to grant—a virtue reserved only for the gardener's son ! I cannot forego my hopes in the moment of their fulfilment ! I adhere to the contract—your father's ruin or your hand.

Pauline. Then all is over. Sir, I have decided.

[*The clock strikes one.*]

Enter DAMAS and MELNOTTE.

Damas. Your servant, cousin Deschappelles. Let me introduce Colonel Morier.

Mme. Deschap. [*curtsying very low*]. What, the celebrated hero ? This is, indeed, an honour !

[*MELNOTTE bows, and remains in the background.*]

Damas [*to Pauline*]. My little cousin, I congratulate you. What, no smile—no blush ? You are going to be divorced from poor Melnotte, and marry this rich gentleman. You ought to be excessively happy !

Pauline. Happy !

Damas. Why, how pale you are, child !—Poor Pauline ! Hist—confide in me ! Do they force you to this ?

Pauline. No !

Damas. You act with your own free consent ?

Pauline. My own consent—yes.

Damas. Then you are the most—I will not say what you are.

Pauline. You think ill of me—be it so—yet if you knew all——

Damas. There is some mystery—speak out, *Pauline*.

Pauline [*suddenly*]. Oh, perhaps you can save me! you are our relation—our friend. My father is on the verge of bankruptcy—this day he requires a large sum to meet demands that cannot be denied; that sum Beauseant will advance—this hand the condition of the barter. Save me if you have the means—save me! You will be repaid above!

Damas [*aside*]. I recant—Women are not so bad after all! [*Aloud.*] Humph, child! I cannot help you—I am too poor.

Pauline. The last plank to which I clung is shivered.

Damas. Hold—you see my friend Morier: Melnotte is his most intimate friend—fought in the same fields—slept in the same tent. Have you any message to send to Melnotte? any word to soften this blow?

Pauline. He knows Melnotte—he will see him—he will bear to him my last farewell—[*approaches MELNOTTE*]—He has a stern air—he turns away from me—he despises me!—Sir, one word I beseech you.

Mel. Her voice again! How the old time comes o'er me!

Damas [*to Madame*]. Don't interrupt them. He is going to tell her what a rascal young Melnotte is; he knows him well, I promise you.

Mme. Deschap. So considerate in you, cousin *Damas*!

[*DAMAS approaches DESCHAPPELLES; converses apart with him in dumb show—DESCHAPPELLES shows him a paper, which he inspects and takes.*]

Pauline. Thrice have I sought to speak; my courage fails me.—

Sir, is it true that you have known—nay, are
The friend of—Melnotte?

Mel. Lady, yes!—Myself

And misery know the man!

Pauline.

And you will see him,
And you will bear to him—ay—word for word,
All that this heart, which breaks in parting from him,
Would send, ere still for ever?

Mel. He hath told me
You have the right to choose from out the world
A worthier bridegroom;—he forgoes all claim,
Even to murmur at his doom. Speak on!

Pauline. Tell him, for years I never nursed a
thought
That was not his;—that on his wandering way,
Daily and nightly, pour'd a mourner's prayers.
Tell him ev'n now that I would rather share
His lowliest lot,—walk by his side, an outcast,—
Work for him, beg with him,—live upon the light
Of one kind smile from him,—than wear the crown
The Bourbon lost!

Mel. [*aside*]. Am I already mad?
And does delirium utter such sweet words
Into a dreamer's ear? [*Aloud*]. You love him thus,
And yet desert him?

Pauline. Say, that, if his eye
Could read this heart,—its struggles, its temptations,—
His love itself would pardon that desertion!
Look on that poor old man,—he is my father;
He stands upon the verge of an abyss!—
He calls his child to save him! Shall I shrink
From him who gave me birth?—withhold my hand,
And see a parent perish? Tell him this,
And say—that we shall meet again in Heaven!

Mel. Lady—I—I—what is this riddle?—what
The nature of this sacrifice?

Pauline [*pointing to DAMAS*]. Go, ask him!

Beau. [*from the table*]. The papers are prepared—we
only need
Your hand and seal.

Mel. Stay, lady—one word more.
Were but your duty with your faith united,
Would you still share the low-born peasant's lot?

Pauline. Would I? Ah, better death with him I love
Than all the pomp—which is but as the flowers
That crown the victim!—[*Turning away*]. I am ready.

[*MET-FORTE rushes to DAMAS.*

Damas.

There—

This is the schedule—this the total.

Beau. [*to DESCHAPPELLES, showing notes*]. These

Are yours the instant she has sign'd; you are
Still the great House of Lyons!

[*The Notary is about to hand the contract to
PAULINE, when MELNOTTE seizes it and tears it.*

Beau. Are you mad?

M. Deschap. How, sir! What means this insult?

Mel. Peace, old man!

I have a prior claim. Before the face
Of man and Heaven I urge it; I outbid
Yon sordid huckster for your priceless jewel.

[*Giving a pocket-book.*

There is the sum twice told! Blush not to take it:
There's not a coin that is not bought and hallow'd
In the cause of nations with a soldier's blood!

Beau. Torments and death!

Pauline. That voice! Thou art—

Mel. Thy husband!

[*PAULINE rushes into his arms.*

Look up! Look up, Pauline!—for I can bear
Thine eyes! The stain is blotted from my name.
I have redeem'd mine honour. I can call
On France to sanction thy divine forgiveness!
Oh, joy!—Oh, rapture! By the midnight watchfires
Thus have I seen thee! thus foretold this hour!
And 'midst the roar of battle, thus have heard
The beating of thy heart against my own!

Beau. Fool'd, duped, and triumph'd over in the hour
Of mine own victory! Curses on ye both!
May thorns be planted in the marriage-bed!
And love grow sour'd and blacken'd into hate
Such as the hate that gnaws me!

Damas.

Curse away

And let me tell thee, Beauseant, a wise proverb
The Arabs have,—“Curses are like young chickens,
[*Solemnly.*] And still come home to roost!”

Beau.

Their happiness

Maddens my soul! I am powerless and revengeless!

[*To MADAME.*

I wish you joy! Ha! ha! the gardener's son! [*Exit.*

Damas [*to GLAVIS*]. Your friend intends to hang him-
self! Methinks

You ought to be his travelling companion!

Gla. Sir, you are exceedingly obliging!

[*Exit.*
1 2

Pauline. Oh
My father, you are saved,—and by my husband !
Ah, blessed hour !

Mel. Yet you weep still, Pauline

Pauline. But on thy breast !—*these* tears are sweet and holy !

M. Deschap. You have won love and honour nobly, sir !
Take her ;—be happy both !

Mme. Deschap. I'm all astonish'd !
Who, then, is Colonel Morier ?

Damas. You behold him !

Mel. Morier no more after this happy day !
I would not bear again my father's name
Till I could deem it spotless ! The hour's come !
Heaven smiled on conscience ! As the soldier rose
From rank to rank, how sacred was the fame
That cancell'd crime, and raised him nearer thee !

Mme. Deschap. A colonel and a hero ! Well, that's something !

He's wondrously improved ! I wish you joy, sir !

Mel. Ah ! the same love that tempts us into sin,
If it be true love, works out its redemption ;
And he who seeks repentance for the Past
Should woo the Angel Virtue in the Future.

RICHELIEU;
OR,
THE CONSPIRACY.

“Le Comte de Soissons, et le Duc de Bouillon, avaient une bonne armée, et ils savaient la conduire ; et pour plus grande sûreté, tandis que cette armée devait s'avancer, on devait assassiner le Cardinal et faire soulever Paris. . . Les Conjurés faisaient un traité avec l'Espagne pour introduire des troupes en France, et pour y mettre tout en confusion dans une Régence qu'on croyait prochaine, et dont chacun espérait profiter. . . Richelieu avait perdu toute sa faveur, et ne conservait que l'avantage d'être nécessaire. Le bonheur du Cardinal voulut encore que le complot fut découvert, et qu'une copie du traité lui tombât entre les mains.”—*Voltaire, Hist. Gen.*

PREFACE.

THE administration of Cardinal Richelieu, whom (despite all his darker qualities) Voltaire and history justly consider the true architect of the French monarchy, and the great parent of French civilization, is characterized by features alike tragic and comic. A weak king—an ambitious favourite; a despicable conspiracy against the minister, nearly always associated with a dangerous treason against the State—these, with little variety of names and dates, constitute the eventful cycle through which, with a dazzling ease, and an arrogant confidence, the great luminary fulfilled its destinies. Blent together, in startling contrast, we see the grandest achievements and the pettiest agents;—the spy—the mistress—the capuchin;—the destruction of feudalism;—the humiliation of Austria;—the dismemberment of Spain.

Richelieu himself is still what he was in his own day—a man of two characters. If, on the one hand, he is justly represented as inflexible and vindictive, crafty and unscrupulous; so, on the other, it cannot be denied that he was placed in times in which the long impunity of every licence required stern examples—that he was beset by perils and intrigues, which gave a certain excuse to the subtlest inventions of self-defence—that his ambition was inseparably connected with a passionate love for the glory of his country—and that, if he was her dictator, he was not less her benefactor. It has been fairly remarked, by the most impartial historians, that he was no less generous to merit than severe to crime—that, in the various departments of the State, the Army, and the Church, he selected and distinguished the ablest aspirants—that the wars which he conducted were, for the most part, essential to the preservation of France, and Europe itself, from the formidable encroachments of the Austrian House—that, in

spite of those wars, the people were not oppressed with exorbitant imposts—and that he left the kingdom he had governed in a more flourishing and vigorous state than at any former period of the French history, or at the decease of Louis XIV.

The cabals formed against this great statesman were not carried on by the patriotism of public virtue, or the emulation of equal talent: they were but court struggles, in which the most worthless agents had recourse to the most desperate means. In each, as I have before observed, we see combined the twofold attempt to murder the minister, and to betray the country. Such, then, are the agents, and such the designs with which truth, in the drama as in history, requires us to contrast the celebrated Cardinal;—not disguising his foibles or his vices, but not unjust to the grander qualities (especially the love of country), by which they were often dignified, and, at times, redeemed.

The historical drama is the concentration of historical events. In the attempt to place upon the stage the picture of an era, that licence with dates and details, which Poetry permits, and which the highest authorities in the Drama of France herself have sanctioned, has been, though not unsparingly, indulged. The conspiracy of the Duc de Bouillon is, for instance, amalgamated with the *dénouement* of *The Day of Dupes*; * and circumstances connected with the treason of Cinq Mars (whose brilliant youth and gloomy catastrophe tend to subvert poetic and historic justice, by seducing us to forget his base ingratitude and his perfidious apostasy) are identified with the fate of the earlier favourite Baradas,† whose sudden rise and as sudden fall passed into a proverb. I ought to add, that

* “Le Cardinal se croit perdu, et prépare sa retraite. Ses amis lui conseillent de tenter enfin auprès du Roi un nouvel effort. Le Cardinal va trouver le Roi à Versailles. Le Roi, qui avait sacrifié son ministre par faiblesse, se remit par faiblesse entre ses mains, et il lui abandonne ceux qui l’avaient perdu. Ce jour qui est encore à présent appelé *La Journée des Dupes*, fut celui du pouvoir absolu du Cardinal.”—*Voltaire, Hist. Gen.*

† “En six mois il (le Roi) fit (Baradas) premier Ecuyer, premier Gentilhomme de la Chambre, Capitaine de St. Germain, et Lieutenant de Roi, en Champagne. En moins de temps encore, on lui ôta tout, et des débris de sa grandeur, à peine lui resta-t-il de quoi payer ses dettes: de sorte que pour signifier une grande fortune dissipée aussi qu’acquise on disait en commun proverbe, *Fortune de Baradas*.”—*Anquetil.*

the noble romance of "Cinq Mars" suggested one of the scenes in the fifth act; and that for the conception of some portion of the intrigue connected with De Manprat and Julie, I am, with great alterations of incident, and considerable if not entire reconstruction of character, indebted to an early and admirable novel by the author of "Picciola."*

LONDON, *March*, 1839.

* It may be as well, however, to caution the English reader against some of the impressions which the eloquence of both the writers I refer to are calculated to leave. They have exaggerated the more evil, and have kept out of sight the nobler qualities of the Cardinal.

NOTE.

THE length of the play necessarily requires curtailments on the stage—the principal of which are enclosed within brackets. Many of the passages thus omitted, however immaterial to the audience, must obviously be such as the *reader* would be least inclined to dispense with—viz., those which, without being absolutely essential to the business of the stage, contain either the subtler strokes of character, or the more poetical embellishments of description. An important consequence of these suppressions is, that Richelieu himself is left, too often and too unrelievedly, to positions which place him in an *amiable* light, without that shadowing forth of his more sinister motives and his fiercer qualities, which is attempted in the written play. Thus, the *character* takes a degree of credit due only to the *situation*. To judge the author's conception of Richelieu fairly, and to estimate how far it is consistent with historical portraiture, the play must be *read*.

TO
THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE, K.G.,
&c., &c.,

THIS DRAMA

IS INSCRIBED,

IN TRIBUTE TO THE TALENTS WHICH COMMAND, AND THE
QUALITIES WHICH ENDEAR, RESPECT.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

LOUIS THE THIRTEENTH.

GASTON, DUKE OF ORLEANS, *brother to Louis XIII.*

BARADAS, *favourite of the King, First Gentleman of the Chamber, Premier Ecuyer, &c.*

CARDINAL RICHELIEU.

THE CHEVALIER DE MAUPRAT.

THE SIEUR DE BERINGHEN, *in attendance on the King,* one of the Conspirators.*

JOSEPH, *a Capuchin, Richelieu's confidant.*

HUGUET, *an officer of Richelieu's household guard—a Spy.*

FRANÇOIS, *First Page to Richelieu.*

FIRST COURTIER.

CAPTAIN OF THE ARCHERS.

FIRST, SECOND, THIRD SECRETARIES OF STATE.

GOVERNOR OF THE BASTILE.

GAOLER.

Courtiers, Pages, Conspirators, Officers, Soldiers, &c.

JULIE DE MORTEMAR, *an Orphan, ward to Richelieu.*

MARIAN DE LORME, *Mistress to Orleans, but in Richelieu's pay.*

Properly speaking, the King's First Valet de Chambre—a post of great importance at that time.

RICHELIEU ;

OR,

THE CONSPIRACY.

ACT I.

FIRST DAY.

SCENE I.—*A room in the house of MARION DE LORME ; a table towards the front of the stage (with wine, fruits, &c.), at which are seated BARADAS, Four Courtiers, splendidly dressed in the costume of 1641-2 ;— the DUKE OF ORLEANS reclining on a large fauteuil ;—MARION DE LORME standing at the back of his chair, offers him a goblet, and then retires. At another table, DE BERINGHEN, DE MAUPRAT, playing at dice ; other Courtiers, of inferior rank to those at the table of the Duke, looking on.*

Orle. [*drinking*]. Here's to our enterprise !

Bar. [*glancing at MARION*].

Hush, sir !

Orle. [*aside*].

Nay, Count,

You may trust her ; she doats on me ; no house
So safe as Marion's. * [At our statelier homes
The very walls do play the eaves-dropper.
There's not a sunbeam creeping o'er our floors
But seems a glance from that malignant eye
Which reigns o'er France ; our fatal greatness lives
In the sharp glare of one relentless day.
But Richelieu's self forgets to fear the sword
The myrtle hides ; and Marion's silken robe
Casts its kind charity o'er fiercer sins
Than those which haunt the rosy path between
The lip and eye of beauty.—Oh, no house
So safe as Marion's.]

* The passages enclosed in brackets are omitted in representation.

Bar. Still, we have a secret.
And oil and water—woman and a secret—
Are hostile properties.

Orle. Well—Marion, see
How the play prospers yonder.

[*MARION goes to the next table, looks on for a few moments, then exit.*]

Bar. [*producing a parchment*]. I have now
All the conditions drawn ; it only needs
Our signatures : upon receipt of this,
(Where to is join'd the schedule of our treaty
With the Count-Duke,* the Richelieu of the Escorial,)
Bouillon will join his army with the Spaniard,
March on to Paris,—there, dethrone the King :
You will be Regent ; I, and ye, my Lords,
Form the new Council. So much for the core
Of our great scheme.

Orle. But Richelieu is an Argus ;
One of his hundred eyes will light upon us,
And then—good-bye to life.

Bar. To gain the prize
We must destroy the Argus :—ay, my Lords,
The scroll the core, but blood must fill the veins,
Of our design ;—while this despatch'd to Bouillon,
Richelieu despatch'd to heaven !—The last my charge.
Meet here to-morrow night. You, sir, as first
In honour and in hope, meanwhile select
Some trusty knave to bear the scroll to Bouillon ;
Midst Richelieu's foes I'll find some desperate hand
To strike for vengeance, while we stride to power.

Orle. So be it ;—to-morrow, midnight. Come, my
Lords.

[*Exeunt ORLEANS, and the Courtiers in his train.*
Those at the other table rise, salute ORLEANS,
and reseal themselves.]

De Ber. Double the stakes.

De Mau.

Done.

De Ber.

Bravo ; faith, it shames me

To bleed a purse already in extremis.

De Mau. Nay, as you've had the patient to yourself
So long, no other doctor should despatch it.

[*DE MAUPRAT throws and loses.*]

* Olivares, Minister of Spain.

Omnes. Lost! Ha, ha!—poor De Mauprat!

De Ber. One throw more?

De Mau. No; I am bankrupt [*pushing gold*]. There goes all—except

My honour and my sword. [*They rise.*]

De Ber. Long cloaks and honour

Went out of vogue together, when we found
We got on much more rapidly without them;
The sword, indeed, is never out of fashion,—
The devil has care of *that*.

First Gamester. Ay, take the sword
To Cardinal Richelieu:—he gives gold for steel,
When worn by brave men.

De Mau. Richelieu!

De Ber. [*to BARADAS*]. At that name
He changes colour, bites his nether lip.
Ev'n in his brightest moments whisper "Richelieu,"
And you cloud all his sunshine.

Bar. I have mark'd it,
And I will learn the wherefore.

De Mau. The Egyptian
Dissolved her richest jewel in a draught:
Would I could so melt time and all its treasures,
And drain it thus. [*Drinking.*]

De Ber. Come, gentlemen, what say ye,
A walk on the parade?

Omnes. Ay; come, De Mauprat.

De Mau. Pardon me; we shall meet again ere nightfall.

Bar. I'll stay and comfort Mauprat.

De Ber. Comfort!—when
We gallant fellows have run out a friend,
There's nothing left—except to run him through!
There's the last act of friendship.

De Mau. Let me keep
That favour in reserve; in all beside
Your most obedient servant.

[*Exeunt DE BERINGHEN, &c. Manent DE MAUPRAT
and BARADAS.*]

Bar. You have lost—
You are not sad.

De Mau. Sad!—Life and gold have wings,

And must fly one day: open, then, their cages
And wish them merry.

Bar. You're a strange enigma:—
Fiery in war—and yet to glory lukewarm;
All mirth in action—in repose all gloom—
These are extremes in which the unconscious heart
Betrays the fever of deep-fix'd disease.
Confide in me! our young days roll'd together
In the same river, glassing the same stars
That smile i' the heaven of hope;—alike we made
Bright-wingèd steeds of our uniform'd chimeras,
Spurring the fancies upward to the air,
Wherein we shaped fair castles from the cloud.
Fortune of late has sever'd us—and led
Me to the rank of Courtier, Count and Favourite,—
You to the titles of the wildest gallant
And bravest knight in France;—are you content?
No;—trust in me—some gloomy secret—

De Mau. Ay:—
A secret that doth haunt me, as, of old,
Men were possess'd of fiends!—where'er I turn,
The grave yawns dark before me!—*I will* trust you;—
Hating the Cardinal, and beguiled by Orleans,
You know I join'd the Languedoc revolt—
Was captured—sent to the Bastile—

Bar. But shared
The general pardon, which the Duke of Orleans
Won for himself and all in the revolt,
Who but obey'd his orders.

De Mau. Note the phrase;—
“*Obey'd his orders.*” Well, when on my way
To join the duke in Languedoc, I (then
The down upon my lip—less man than boy)
Leading young valours—reckless as myself,
Seized on the town of Faviaux, and displaced
The royal banners for the rebel. Orleans
(Never too daring,) when I reach'd the camp,
Blamed me for acting—mark—*without his orders*:
Upon this quibble Richelieu razed my name
Out of the general pardon.

Bar. Yet released you
From the Bastile—

De Mau. To call me to his presence,
And thus address me :—" You have seized a town
Of France, without the orders of your leader,
And for this treason, but one sentence—DEATH."

Bar. Death !

De Mau. " I have pity on your youth and birth,
Nor wish to glut the headsman ;—join your troop,
Now on the march against the Spaniards ;—change
The traitor's scaffold for the soldier's grave ;—
Your memory stainless—they who shared your crime
Exiled or dead—your king shall never learn it."

Bar. O tender pity !—O most charming prospect !
Blown into atoms by a bomb, or drill'd
Into a cullender by gunshot !—Well ?—

De Mau. You have heard if I fought bravely.—Death
became
Desired as Daphne by the eager Daygod.
Like him I chased the nymph—to grasp the laurel !
I could not die !

Bar. Poor fellow !

De Mau. When the Cardinal
Review'd the troops—his eye met mine ;—he frown'd,
Summon'd me forth—" How's this ! " quoth he ; " you
have shunn'd
The sword—beware the axe !—'twill fall one day ! "
He left me thus—we were recall'd to Paris,
And—you know all !

Bar. And, knowing this, why halt you,
Spell'd by the rattle-snake,—while in the breasts
Of your firm friends beat hearts, that vow the death
Of your grim tyrant ?—Wake !—Be one of us ;
The time invites—the king detests the Cardinal,
Dares not disgrace—but groans to be deliver'd
Of that too great a subject—join your friends,
Free France, and save yourself.

De Mau. Hush ! Richelieu bears
A charmed life ;—to all, who have braved his power,
One common end—the block.

Bar. Nay, if he live,
The block your doom ;—

De Mau. Better the victim, Count,
Than the assassin.—France requires a Richelieu,

But does not need a Mauprat. Truce to this;—
 All time one midnight, where my thoughts are spectres.
 What to my fame?—What love?—

Bar. Yet dost thou love not ?

De Mau. Love?—I am young——

Bar. And Julie fair ! [*Aside.*] It is so,

Upon the margin of the grave—his hand
 Would pluck the rose that I would win and wear !

[*Aloud.*]—[Thou lov'st—

De Mau. Who, lonely in the midnight
 tent,

Gazed on the watch-fires in the sleepless air,
 Nor chose one star amidst the clustering hosts
 To bless it in the name of some fair face
 Set in his spirit, as that star in Heaven ?
 For our divine affections, like the spheres,
 Move ever, ever musical.

Bar. You speak

As one who fed on poetry.

De Mau.

Why, man,

The thoughts of lovers stir with poetry
 As leaves with summer-wind.—The heart that loves
 Dwells in an Eden, hearing angel-lutes,
 As Eve in the First Garden. Hast thou seen
 My Julie, and not felt it henceforth dull
 To live in the common world—and talk in words
 That clothe the feelings of the frigid herd ?—
 Upon the perfumed pillow of her lips—
 As on his native bed of roses flushed
 With Paphian skies—Love smiling sleeps:—Her voice
 The blest interpreter of thoughts as pure
 As virgin wells where Dian takes delight,
 Or fairies dip their changelings !—In the maze
 Of her harmonious beauties—Modesty
 (Like some severer grace that leads the choir
 Of her sweet sisters) every airy motion
 Attunes to such chaste charm, that Passion holds
 His burning breath, and will not with a sigh
 Dissolve the spell that binds him !—Oh those eyes
 That woo the earth—shadowing more soul than lurks
 Under the lids of Psycho !—Go !—thy lip
 Curls at the purfled phrases of a lover—

Love thou, and if thy love be deep as mine,
Thou wilt not laugh at poets.

Bar. [aside]. With each word
Thou wak'st a jealous demon in my heart,
And my hand clutches at my hilt.—]

De Mau. [gaily]. No more!—
I love!—Your breast holds both my secrets!—Never
Unbury either!—Come, while yet we may,
We'll bask us in the noon of rosy life:—
Lounge through the gardens,—flaunt it in the taverns,—
Laugh,—game,—drink,—feast:—If so confined my days,
Faith, I'll enclose the nights.—Pshaw! not so grave;
I'm a true Frenchman!—*Vive la bagatelle!*

[*As they are going out, enter HUGUET and four
Arquebusiers.*

Hug. Messire De Mauprat,—I arrest you!—Follow
To the Lord Cardinal.

De Mau. You see, my friend,
I'm out of my suspense!—the tiger's play'd
Long enough with his prey.—Farewell!—Hereafter
Say, when men name me, "Adrien de Mauprat
Lived without hope, and perish'd without fear!"

[*Exeunt DE MAUPRAT, HUGUET, &c.*

Bar. Farewell!—I trust for ever! I design'd thee
For Richelieu's murderer—but, as well his martyr!
In childhood you the stronger—and I cursed you;
In youth the fairer—and I cursed you still;
And now my rival!—While the name of Julie
Hung on thy lips—I smiled—for then I saw,
In my mind's eye, the cold and grinning Death
Hang o'er thy head the pall!—Ambition, Love,
Ye twin-born stars of daring destinies,
Sit in my house of Life!—By the king's aid
I will be Julie's husband—in despite
Of my Lord Cardinal!—by the king's aid
I will be minister of France—in spite
Of my Lord Cardinal!—And then—what then?
The king loves Julie—feeble prince—false master—

[*Producing and gazing on the parchment.*
Then, by the aid of Bonillon, and the Spaniard,
I will dethrone the king; and all—ha!—ha!—
All, in despite of my Lord Cardinal!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A room in the Palais Cardinal, the walls hung with arras. A large screen in one corner. A table covered with books, papers, &c. A rude clock in a recess. Busts, statues, book-cases, weapons of different periods and banners suspended over RICHELIEU'S chair.

RICHELIEU and JOSEPH.

Rich. And so you think this new conspiracy
The craftiest trap yet laid for the old fox?—
Fox!—Well, I like the nickname! What did Plutarch
Say of the Greek Lysander?

Joseph. I forget.

Rich. That where the lion's skin fell short, he eked it
Out with the fox's! A great statesman, Joseph,
That same Lysander!

Joseph. Orleans heads the traitors.

Rich. A very wooden head, then! Well?

Joseph. The favourite,
Count Baradas—

Rich. A weed of hasty growth;
First gentleman of the chamber—titles, lands,
And the king's ear!—It cost me six long winters
To mount as high, as in six little moons
This painted lizard—But I hold the ladder,
And when I shake—he falls! What more?

Joseph. A scheme

To make your orphan-ward an instrument
To aid your foes. You placed her with the queen,
One of the royal chamber,—as a watch
I' th' enemy's quarters—

Rich. And the silly child
Visits me daily,—calls me "Father,"—prays
Kind Heaven to bless me—And for all the rest
As well have placed a doll about the queen!
She does not heed who frowns—who smiles; with whom
The king confers in whispers; notes not when
Men who last week were foes, are found in corners
Mysteriously affectionate; words spoken
Within closed doors she never hears;—by chance

Taking the air at keyholes—Senseless puppet!
No ears—nor eyes!—and yet she says, “She loves me!”
Go on——

Joseph. Your ward has charm’d the king——

Rich.

Out on you!

Have I not, one by one, from such fair shoots
Pluck’d the insidious ivy of his love?
And shall it creep around my blossoming tree
Where innocent thoughts, like happy birds, make music
That spirits in Heaven might hear? They’re sinful, too,
Those passionate surfeits of the rampant flesh,
The church cōdemns them; and to us, my Joseph,
The props and pillars of the church, most hurtful.
The king is weak—whoever the king loves
Must rule the king; the lady loves another,
The other rules the lady—thus we’re balk’d
Of our own proper sway—The king must have
No goddess but the State:—the State—that’s Richelieu!

Joseph. This not the worst;—Louis, in all decorous,
And deeming you her least compliant guardian,
Would veil his suit by marriage with his minion,
Your prosperous foe, Count Baradas!

Rich.

Ha! ha!

I have another bride for Baradas.

Joseph. You, my lord?

Rich.

Ay—more faithful than the love

Of fickle woman:—when the head lies lowliest,
Clasping him fondest;—Sorrow never knew
So sure a soother,—and her bed is stainless!

Joseph [*aside*]. If of the grave he speaks, I do not wonder
That priests are bachelors!

Enter FRANÇOIS.

Fran.

Mademoiselle de Mortemar.

Rich. Most opportune—admit her.

[*Exit FRANÇOIS.*

In my closet

You’ll find a rosary, Joseph; ere you tell
Three hundred beads, I’ll summon you. Stay, Joseph;—
I did omit an Ave in my matins,—
A grievous fault;—atone it for me, Joseph;
There is a scourge within; I am weak, you strong.

It were but charity to take my sin
On such broad shoulders. Exercise is healthful.

Joseph. I ! guilty of such criminal presumption
As to mistake myself for you—No, never !
Think it not ! [*Aside.*] Troth, a pleasant invitation !

[*Exit* JOSEPH.]

Enter JULIE DE MORTEMAR.

Rich. That's my sweet Julie !—why, upon this face
Blushes such daybreak, one might swear the morning
Were come to visit Tithon.

Julie [*placing herself at his feet*]. Are you gracious ?—
May I say "Father ?"

Rich. Now and ever !

Julie. Father !

A sweet word to an orphan.

Rich. No ; not orphan
While Richelieu lives ; thy father loved me well ;
My friend, ere I had flatterers (now, I'm great,
In other phrase, I'm friendless)—he died young
In years, not service, and bequeath'd thee to me ;
And thou shalt have a dowry, girl, to buy
Thy mate amidst the mightiest. Drooping ?—sighs ?
Art thou not happy at the court ?

Julie. Not often.

Rich. [*aside*]. Can she love Baradas ? Ah ! at thy heart
There's what can smile and sigh, blush and grow pale,
All in a breath ? Thou art admired—art young ;
Does not his majesty commend thy beauty—
Ask thee to sing to him ?—and swear such sounds
Had smooth'd the brows of Saul ?

Julie. He's very tiresome,
Our worthy king.

Rich. Fie ! kings are never tiresome,
Save to their ministers. What courtly gallants
Charm ladies most ?—De Sourdiac, Longueville, or
The favourite Baradas ?

Julie. A smileless man—
I fear and shun him.

Rich. Yet he courts thee ?

Julie. Then
He is more tiresome than his Majesty.

Rich. Right, girl, shun Baradas. Yet of these flowers
Of France, not one, in whose more honied breath
Thy heart hears summer whisper?

Enter HUGUET.

Hug.

The Chevalier

De Mauprat waits below.

Julie [*starting up*].

De Mauprat!

Rich.

Hem!

He has been tiresome too!—Anon.

[*Exit HUGUET.*]

Julie.

What doth he?—

I mean—I—Does your Eminence—that is—

Know you Messire de Mauprat?

Rich.

Well!—and you—

Has he address'd you often?

Julie.

Often!—No—

Nine times; nay, ten; the last time, by the lattice

Of the great staircase. [*In a melancholy tone.*] The Court
sees him rarely.

Rich. A bold and forward royster!

Julie.

He? nay, modest,

Gentle, and sad, methinks.

Rich.

Wears gold and azure?

Julie. No; sable.

Rich.

So you note his colours, Julie?

Shame on you, child; look loftier. By the mass,

I have business with this modest gentleman.

Julie. You're angry with poor Julie. There's no cause.

Rich. No cause—you hate my foes?

Julie.

I do!

Rich.

Hate Mauprat?

Julie. Not Mauprat. No, not Adrien, father.

Rich.

Adrien!

Familiar!—Go, child; no, not *that* way; wait

In the tapestry chamber; I will join you,—go.

Julie. His brows are knit; I dare not call him father!

But I *must* speak—Your Eminence —

Rich. [*sternly*].

Well, girl!

Julie.

Nay,

Smile on me—one smile more; there, now I'm happy.

Do not rank Mauprat with your foes; he is not,

I know he is not; he loves France too well.

Rich. Not rank De Mauprat with my foes ? So be it.
I'll blot him from that list.

Julie. That's my own father.

[*Exit JULIE.*

Rich. [*ringing a small bell on the table*]. Huguet !

Enter HUGUET.

De Mauprat struggled not, nor murmured ?

Hug. No ; proud and passive.

Rich. Bid him enter.—Hold.

Look that he hide no weapon. —Humph, despair
Makes victims sometimes victors. When he has enter'd
Glide round unseen ;—place thyself yonder [*pointing to*
the screen] ; watch him ;

If he show violence—(let me see thy carbine ;

So, a good weapon ;)—if he play the lion,

Why—the dog's death.

Hug. I never miss my mark.

[*Exit HUGUET ; RICHELIEU seats himself at the table, and slowly arranges the papers before him. Enter DE MAUPRAT, preceded by HUGUET, who then retires behind the screen.*

Rich. Approach, sir.—Can you call to mind the hour,
Now three years since, when in this room, methinks,
Your presence honour'd me ?

De Mau.

It is, my Lord,

One of my most—

Rich. [*drily*]. Delightful recollections.*

De Mau. [*aside*]. St. Denis ! doth he make a jest of axe
And headsman ?

Rich. [*sternly*]. I did then accord you

A mercy ill requited—you still live ?

De Mau. To meet death face to face at last.

[*Rich.*

Your words

Are bold.

De Mau. My deeds have not belied them.

Rich.

Deeds !

O miserable delusion of man's pride !

* There are many anecdotes of the irony, often so terrible, in which Richelieu indulged. But he had a love for humour in its more hearty and genial shape. He would send for Boisrobert "to make him laugh,"—and grave ministers and magnates waited in the ante-room, while the great cardinal listened and responded to the sallies of the lively wit.

Deeds! cities sack'd, fields ravaged, hearths profaned,
Men butcher'd! In your hour of doom behold
The *deeds* you boast of! From rank showers of blood,
And the red light of blazing roofs, you build
The rainbow glory, and to shuddering conscience
Cry,—Lo, the bridge to Heaven!

De Mau.

If war be sinful,

Your hand the gauntlet cast.

Rich.

It was so, sir.

Note the distinction :—I weigh'd well the cause
Which made the standard holy; raised the war
But to secure the peace. France bled—I groan'd;
But look'd beyond; and, in the vista, saw
France saved, and I exulted. You—but you
Were but the tool of slaughter—knowing nought,
Foreseeing nought, nought hoping, nought lamenting,
And for nought fit—save cutting throats for hire.
Deeds, marry, deeds!

De Mau.

If you would deign to speak

Thus to your armies ere they march to battle,
Perchance your Eminence might have the pain
Of the throat-cutting to yourself.

Rich. [aside].

He has wit,

This Mauprat—[*Aloud*]. Let it pass; there is against you
What you can less excuse.] Messire de Mauprat,
Doom'd to sure death, how hast thou since consumed
The time allotted thee for serious thought
And solemn penitence?

De Mau. [embarrassed]. The time, my lord?

Rich. Is not the question plain? I'll answer for thee.
Thou hast sought nor priest nor shrine; no sackcloth
chafed

Thy delicate flesh. The rosary and the death's-head
Have not, with pious meditation, purged
Earth from the carnal gaze. What thou hast *not* done
Brief told; what done, a volume! Wild debauch,
Turbulent riot;—for the morn the dice-box—
Noon claim'd the duel—and the night the wassail;
These, your most holy, pure preparatives,
For death and judgment. Do I wrong you, sir?

De Mau. I was not always thus :—if changed my nature,
Blame that which changed my fate.—Alas, my lord,

[There is a brotherhood which calm-eyed reason
 Can wot not of betwixt despair and mirth.
 My birth-place mid the vines of sunny Provence,
 Perchance the stream that sparkles in my veins
 Came from that wine of passionate life which, erst,
 Glow'd in the wild heart of the troubadour :
 And danger, which makes steadier courage wary,
 But fevers me with an insane delight ;
 As one of old who on the mountain crags
 Caught madness from a Mænad's haunting eyes.
 Were you, my lord,—whose path imperial power,
 And the grave cares of reverent wisdom, guard
 From all that tempts to folly meaner men,—]
 Were you accursed with that which you inflicted—
 By bed and board, dogg'd by one ghastly spectre—
 The while within you youth beat high, and life
 Grew lovelier from the neighbouring frown of death—
 The heart no bud, nor fruit—save in those seeds
 •Most worthless, which spring up, bloom, bear, and wither
 In the same hour—Were this your fate, perchance,
 You would have err'd like me!

Rich.

I might, like you,

Have been a brawler and a reveller ;—not,

Like you, a trickster and a thief.—

De Mau. [*advancing threateningly*]. Lord Cardinal !
 Unsay those words !—

[HUGUET *deliberately raises the carbine.*

Rich. [*waving his hand*]. . Not quite so quick, friend

Huguet ;

Messire de Mauprat is a patient man,

And he can wait !—

You have outrun your fortune ;—

I blame you not, that you would be a beggar—
 Each to his taste !—But I do charge you, sir,
 That, being beggar'd, you would coin false moneys
 Out of that crucible, called DEBT.—To live
 On means not yours—be brave in silks and laces,
 Gallant in steeds—splendid in banquets ;—all
 Not *yours*—ungiven—uninherited—unpaid for ;—
 This is to be a trickster ; and to filch
 Men's art and labour, which to them is wealth,
 Life, daily bread,—quitting all scores with—"Friend,

Must die,—but knowingly to march to marriage—
My lord, it asks the courage of a lion!

Rich. Traitor, thou triflest with me! I know *all*!
Thou hast dared to love my ward—my charge.

De Mau. As rivers
May love the sunlight—basking in the beams,
And hurrying on!—

Rich. Thou hast told her of thy love?

De Mau. My lord, if I had dared to love a maid,
Lowliest in France, I would not so have wronged her,
As bid her link rich life and virgin hope
With one, the deathman's gripe might, from her side,
Pluck at the nuptial altar.

Rich. I believe thee;
Yet since she knows not of thy love, renounce her;
Take life and fortune with another!—Silent?

De Mau. Your fate has been one triumph—you know not
How bless'd a thing it was in my dark hour
To nurse the one sweet thought you bid me banish.
Love hath no need of words;—nor less within
That holiest temple—the Heaven-built soul—
Breathes the recorded vow. Base knight,—false lover
Were he, who barter'd all, that brighten'd grief,
Or sanctified despair, for life and gold.
Revoke your mercy;—I prefer the fate
I look'd for!

Rich. Huguet! to the tapestry chamber
Conduct your prisoner. [To MAUPRAT.]

You will there behold

The executioner:—your doom be private—
And Heaven have mercy on you!

De Mau. When I am dead,
Tell her, I loved her.

Rich. Keep such follies, sir,
For fitter ears;—go—

De Mau. Does he mock me?

[*Exeunt DE MAUPRAT, HUGUET.*]

Rich. Joseph,
Come forth.

Enter JOSEPH.

Methinks your cheek hath lost its rubies;

I fear you have been too lavish of the flesh;
The scourge is heavy.

Joseph. Pray you, change the subject.

Rich. You good men are so modest!—Well, to business!
Go instantly—deeds—notaries!—bid my stewards
Arrange my house by the Luxembourg—*my* house
No more!—a bridal present to my ward,
Who weds to-morrow.

Joseph. Weds, with whom?

Rich. De Mauprat.

Joseph. Penniless husband!

Rich. Bah! the mate for beauty

Should be a man, and not a money-chest!
When her brave sire lay on his bed of death,
I vow'd to be a father to his Julie:—
And so he died—the smile upon his lips!—
And when I spared the life of her young lover,
Methought I saw that smile again!—Who else,
Look you, in all the court—who else so well,
Brave, or supplant the favourite;—balk the king—
Baffle their schemes?—I have tried him:—He has honour
And courage;—qualities that eagle-plume
Men's souls,—and fit them for the fiercest sun,
Which ever melted the weak waxen minds
That flutter in the beams of gaudy Power!
Besides, he has taste, this Mauprat:—When my play
Was acted to dull tiers of lifeless gapers,*
Who had no soul for poetry, I saw him
Applaud in the proper places:—trust me, Joseph,
He is a man of an uncommon promise!

Joseph. And yet your foe.

* The Abbé Arnaud tells us that the queen was a little avenged on the cardinal by the ill success of the tragi-comedy of "Mirame"—more than suspected to be his own—though presented to the world under the foster-name of Desmarests. Its representation (says Pelisson) cost him 300,000 crowns. He was so transported out of himself by the performance, that at one time he thrust his person half out of his box to show himself to the assembly; at another time he imposed silence on the audience, that they might not lose "*des endroits encore plus beaux!*" He said afterwards to Desmarests:—"Eh bien, les Français n'auront donc jamais de goût. Ils n'ont pas été charmés de Mirame!" Arnaud says pithily,—"*On ne pouvoit alors avoir d'autre satisfaction des offenses d'un homme qui étoit maître de tout, et redoutable à tout le monde.*" Nevertheless, his style in prose, though not devoid of the pedantic affectations of the time, often rises into very noble eloquence.

Rich. Have I not foes enow ?
Great men gain doubly when they make foes friends.
Remember my grand maxims :—First employ
All methods to conciliate.*

Joseph. Failing these ?

Rich. [*fiercely*]. All means to crush : as with the opening, and

The clenching of this little hand, I will
Crush the small venom of these stinging courtiers.
So, so, we've baffled Baradas.

Joseph. And when
Check the conspiracy !

Rich. Check, check ? Full way to it.
Let it bud, ripen, flaunt i' the day, and burst
To fruit,—the Dead Sea's fruit of ashes ; ashes
Which I will scatter to the winds.

Go, Joseph ;
When you return, I have a feast for you ;
The last great act of my great play : the verses,
Methinks, are fine,—ah, very fine.—*You write*
Verses ! †—[*aside*] *such* verses !—You have wit, discernment.

Joseph [*aside*]. Worse than the scourge ! Strange that
so great a statesman
Should be so bad a poet.

Rich. What dost thou say ?

Joseph. That it is strange so great a statesman should
Be so sublime a poet.

* "Vialart remarque une chose qui peut expliquer la conduite de Richelieu en d'autres circonstances :—c'est que les seigneurs à qui leur naissance ou leur mérite pouvoit permettre des prétensions, il avoit pour système, de leur accorder au-delà même de leurs droits et de leurs espérances, mais, aussi, une fois comblés—si, au lieu de reconnoître ses services ils se levoient contre lui, et ils traitoit sans miséricorde."—*Anquetil*. See also the Political Testament, and the Mémoires de Cardinal Richelieu, in Petitot's collection :

† "Tantôt fanatique—tantôt fourbe—fonder les religieuses de Calvaire—*faire des vers*." Thus speaks Voltaire of Father Joseph. His talents and influence with Richelieu, grossly exaggerated in his own day, are now rightly estimated.

"C'étoit en effet un homme infatigable—portant dans les entreprises, l'activité, la souplesse, l'opiniâtreté propre à les faire réussir."—*Anquetil*. He wrote a Latin poem, called "La Turciade," in which he sought to excite the kingdoms of Christendom against the Turks. But the inspiration of Tyrtæus was denied to Father Joseph.

Rich. Ah, you rogue;
 Laws die, Books never. Of my ministry
 I am not vain! but of my muse, I own it.
 Come, you shall hear the verses now. [*Takes up a MS.*

Joseph. My lord,
 The deeds, the notaries!

Rich. True, I pity you;
 But business first, then pleasure. [*Exit JOSEPH.*

Rich. [*seats himself and reading*]. Ah, sublime!

Enter DE MAUPRAT and JULIE.

De Mau. Oh, speak, my lord—I dare not think you
 mock me.

And yet—

Rich. Hush—hush—This line must be consider'd!

Julie. Are we not both your children?

Rich. What a couplet!—
 How now! Oh, sir—you live!

De Mau. Why, no, methinks,
 Elysium is not life!

Julie. He smiles!—you smile,
 My father! From my heart for ever, now,
 I'll blot the name of orphan!

Rich. Rise, my children,
 For ye are mine—mine both;—and in your sweet
 And young delight—your love (life's first-born glory)—
 My own lost youth breathes musical!

De Mau. I'll seek
 Temple and priest henceforward, were it but
 To learn Heaven's choicest blessings.

Rich. Thou shalt seek
 Temple and priest right soon; the morrow's sun
 Shall see across these barren thresholds pass
 The fairest bride in Paris.—Go, my children,
 Even I loved once!—Be lovers while ye may!
 How is it with you, sir! You bear it bravely:
 You know, it asks the courage of a lion.

[*Exit JULIE and DE MAUPRAT.*

Rich. Oh godlike Power! Woe, Rapture, Penury,
 Wealth,—
 Marriage and Death, for one infirm old man
 Through a great empire to dispense—withhold—

As the will whispers! And shall things—like motes
That live in my daylight—lackeys of court wages,
Dwarf'd starvelings—manikins, upon whose shoulders
The burthen of a province were a load
More heavy than the globe on Atlas,—cast,
Lots for my robes and sceptre? France! I love thee!
All Earth shall never pluck thee from my heart!
My mistress France—my wedded wife,—sweet France,
Who shall proclaim divorce for thee and me!

[*Exit* RICHELIEU.]

ACT II.

SECOND DAY.

SCENE I.—*A splendid apartment in MAUPRAT's new House. Casements opening to the Gardens, beyond which the domes of the Luxembourg Palace.*

Enter BARADAS.

Bar. Mauprat's new home:—too splendid for a soldier!
But o'er his floors—the while I stalk—methinks
My shadow spreads gigantic to the gloom
The old rude towers of the Bastile cast far
Along the smoothness of the jocund day.—
Well, thou hast 'scaped the fierce caprice of Richelieu;
But art thou farther from the headsman, fool?
Thy secret I have whisper'd to the king;
Thy marriage makes the king thy foe.—Thou stand'st
On the abyss—and in the pool below
I see a ghastly, headless phantom mirror'd;—
Thy likeness ere the marriage moon hath waned.
Meanwhile—meanwhile—ha—ha, if thou art wedded,
Thou art not wived.

Enter MAUPRAT [splendidly dressed].

De Mau.

Was ever fate like mine?

So blest and yet so wretched!

Bar.

Joy, De Mauprat!—

Why, what a brow, man, for your wedding-day!

De Mau. Jest not!—Distraction!

Bar.

What, your wife a shrew

Already? Courage, man—the common lot!

De Mau. Oh! that she were less lovely, or less loved!

Bar. Riddles again!

De Mau.

You know what chanced between

The cardinal and myself.

Bar.

This morning brought

Your letter:—faith, a strange account! I laugh'd

And wept at once for gladness.

De Mau. We were wed
At noon ;—the rite perform'd, came hither !—scarce
Arrived, when——

Bar. Well ?—

De Mau. Wide flew the doors, and lo,
Messire de Beringhen, and this epistle !

Bar. 'Tis the king's hand !—the royal seal !

De Mau. Read—read—

Bar. [*reading*]. “Whereas Adrien de Mauprat, Colonel and Chevalier in our armies, being already guilty of High Treason, by the seizure of our town of Favianx, has presumed, without our knowledge, consent, or sanction, to connect himself by marriage with Julie de Mortemar, a wealthy orphan, attached to the person of Her Majesty, without our knowledge or consent—We do hereby proclaim and declare the said marriage contrary to law. On penalty of death, Adrien de Mauprat will not communicate with the said Julie de Mortemar by word or letter, save in the presence of our faithful servant, the Sieur de Beringhen, and then with such respect and decorum as are due to a demoiselle attached to the Court of France, until such time as it may suit our royal pleasure to confer with the Holy Church on the formal annulment of the marriage, and with our Council on the punishment to be awarded to Messire de Mauprat, who is cautioned, for his own sake, to preserve silence as to our injunction, more especially to Mademoiselle de Mortemar.

“Given under our hand and seal at the Louvre.

“LOUIS.”

Bar. [*returning the letter*]. Amazement !—Did not
Richelieu say, the king
Knew not your crime ?

De Mau. He said so.

Bar. Poor De Mauprat !—
See you the snare, the vengeance worse than death,
Of which you are the victim ?

De Mau. Ha !

Bar. [*aside*]. It works !

[*JULIE and DE BERINGHEN in the Gardens.*
You have not sought the cardinal yet to——

De Mau. No !

Scarce yet my sense awaken'd from the shock;
Now I will seek him.

Bar. Hold, beware!—Stir not
Till we confer again.

De Mau. Speak—out, man!

Bar. Hush!

Your wife!—De Beringhen!—Be on your guard—
Obey the royal orders to the letter.
I'll look around your palace. By my troth
A princely mansion!

De Mau. Stay—

Bar. So new a bridegroom
Can want no visitors;—Your servant, madam!
Oh! happy pair—Oh, charming picture!

[*Exit through a side door.*]

Julie. Adrien,

You left us suddenly—Are you not well?

De Mau. Oh, very well—that is—extremely ill!

Julie. Ill, Adrien? [*Taking his hand.*]

De Mau. Not when I see thee.

[*He is about to lift her hand to his lips when DE
BERINGHEN coughs and pulls his mantle. MAU-
PRAT drops the hand and walks away.*]

Julie. Alas!

Should he not love me?

De Ber. [*aside*]. Have a care; I must
Report each word—each gesture to his Majesty.

De Mau. Sir, if you were not in his Majesty's service,
You'd be the most officious, impudent,
Damn'd busy-body ever interfering
In a man's family affairs.

De Ber. But as
I do belong, sir, to his Majesty—

De Mau. You're lucky!—Still, were we a story higher,
'Twere prudent not to go too near the window.

Julie. Adrien, what have I done? Say, am I changed
Since yesterday?—or was it but for wealth,
Ambition, life—that—that—you swore you loved me?

De Mau. I shall go mad!—I do, indeed I do—

De Ber. [*aside*]. Not love her! that were highly dis-
respectful.

Julie. You do—what, Adrien?

De Mau. Oh! I do, indeed——
 I do think, that this weather is delightful!
 A charming day! the sky is so serene!
 And what a prospect!—[to DE BERINGHEN]. Oh! you
 popinjay!

Julie. He jests at me!—he mocks me!—yet I love him,
 And every look becomes the lips we love!
 Perhaps I am too grave?—You laugh at Julie;
 If laughter please you, welcome be the music!
 Only say, Adrien, that you love me.

De Mau. [kissing her hand]. Ay;
 With my whole heart I love you!——

Now, sir, go,
 And tell that to his Majesty!—Who ever
 Heard of its being a state offence to kiss
 The hand of one's own wife?

Julie. He says he loves me,
 And starts away, as if to say "I love you"
 Meant something very dreadful.—Come, sit by me,—
 I place your chair!—fie on your gallantry!

[*They sit down; as he pushes his chair back, she
 draws hers nearer.*]

Why must this strange Messire de Beringhen
 Be always here? He never takes a hint.
 Do you not wish him gone?

De Mau. Upon my soul
 I do, my Julie!—Send him for your *bouquet*,
 Your glove, your—anything.

Julie. Messire de Beringhen,
 I dropp'd my glove in the gardens by the fountain,
 Or the alcove, or—stay, no, by the statue
 Of Cupid; may I ask you to——

De Ber. To send for it?
 Certainly [*ringing a bell on the table*]. André, Pierre,
 (your rascals, how
 Do ye call them?)

Enter Servants.

Ah—*Madame* has dropp'd her glove
 In the gardens, by the fountain,—or the alcove;
 Or—stay—no, by the statue—eh?—of Cupid.
 Bring it.

De Mau. Did ever now one pair of shoulders
Carry such waggon-loads of impudence
Into a gentleman's drawing-room?

Dear Julie,

I'm busy—letters—visitors—the devil!
I do beseech you leave me—I say—leave me.

Julie [*weeping*]. You are unkind.

[*Exit.*

[*As she goes out, MAUPRAT drops on one knee and
kisses the hem of her mantle, unseen by her.*

De Ber.

Ten millions of apologies—

De Mau. I'll not take one of them. I have, as yet,
Withstood all things—my heart—my love—my rights.
But Julie's tears!—When is this farce to end?

De Ber. Oh! when you please. His Majesty requests
me,

As soon as you infringe his gracious orders,
To introduce you to the Governor
Of the Bastile. I should have had that honour
Before, but, gad, my foible is good-nature;
One can't be hard upon a friend's infirmities.

De Mau. I know the king can send me to the scaffold—
Dark prospect!—but I'm used to it; and if
The Church and Council, by this hour to-morrow,
One way or other settle not the matter,
I will—

De Ber. What, my dear sir?

De Mau.

Show you the door,

My dear, dear sir; talk as I please, with whom
I please, in my own house, dear sir, until
His Majesty shall condescend to find
A stouter gentleman than you, dear sir,
To take me out; and now you understand me,
My dear, most dear—oh damnably dear sir!

De Ber. What, almost in a passion! you will cool
Upon reflection. Well, since *Madame's* absent,
I'll take a small refreshment. Now, don't stir;
Be careful;—how's your Burgundy?—I'll taste it—
Finish it all before I leave you. Nay,
No form;—you see I make myself at home.

[*Exit DE BERINGHEN.*

De Mau. [*going to the door through which BARADAS had
passed*]. Baradas! Count!

Enter BARADAS.

You spoke of snares—of vengeance
Sharper than death—be plainer.

Bar.

What so clear ?

Richelieu has but two passions—

De Mau.

Richelieu !

Bar.

Yes !

Ambition and revenge—in you both blended.
First for ambition—Julie is his ward,
Innocent—docile—pliant to his will—
He placed her at the court—foresaw the rest—
The king loves Julie !

De Mau.

Merciful Heaven ! The king !

Bar. Such Cupids lend new plumes to Richelieu's
wings :

But the court etiquette must give such Cupids
The veil of Hymen—(Hymen but in name).
He look'd abroad—found you his foe :—*thus* served
Ambition—by the grandeur of his ward,
And vengeance—by dishonour to his foe !

De Mau. Prove this.

Bar.

You have the proof—the royal Letter :—
Your strange exemption from the general pardon,
Known but to me and Richelieu ; can you doubt
Your friend to acquit your foe ? The truth is glaring—
Richelieu alone could tell the princely lover
The tale which sells your life,—or buys your honour !

De Mau. I see it all ? Mock pardon—hurried nuptials—
False bounty !—all !—the serpent of that smile !
Oh ! it stings home !

Bar.

You yet shall crush his malice ;
Our plans are sure :—Orleans is at our head ;
We meet to-night ; join us, and with us triumph.

De Mau. To-night ?—Oh, Heaven !—my marriage night !
—Revenge !

Bar. [What class of men, whose white lips do not curse
The grim, insatiate, universal tyrant ?
We, noble-born—where are our antique rights—
Our feudal seigniories—our castled strength,
That did divide us from the base Plebeians,
And made our swords our law—where are they ? Trod
To dust—and o'er the graves of our dead power

Scaffolds are monuments—the kingly house
Shorn of its beams—the Royal Sun of France
'Clipped by this blood-red comet. Where we turn,
Nothing but Richelieu!—armies—church—state—laws,
But mirrors that do multiply his beams.
He sees all—acts all—Argus and Briaræus—
Spy at our boards—and deathsman at our hearths;
Under the venom of one laidley nightshade,
Wither the lilies of all France.

De Mau. [*impatiently*]. But Julie—

Bar. [*unheeding him*]. As yet the Fiend that serves hath
saved his power

From every snare; and in the epitaphs
Of many victims dwells a warning moral
That preaches caution. Were I not assured
That what before was hope is ripen'd now
Into most certain safety, trust me, Mauprat,
I still could hush my hate and mark thy wrongs,
And say "Be patient!" Now, the King himself
Smiles kindly when I tell him that his peers
Will rid him of his priest. You knit your brows,
Noble impatience!—Pass we to our scheme!]
'Tis Richelieu's wont, each morn, within his chapel
(Hypocrite worship ended), to dispense
Alms to the Mendicant-friars,—in that guise
A band (yourself the leader) shall surround
And seize the despot.

De Mau. But the king?—but Julie?

Bar. The king, infirm in health, in mind more feeble,
Is but the plaything of a minister's will.
Were Richelieu dead—his power were mine; and Louis
Soon should forget his passion and your crime.
But whither now?

De Mau. I know not; I scarce hear thee;
A little while for thought: anon I'll join thee;
But now, all air seems tainted, and I loathe
The face of man!

[*Exit DE MAUPRAT through the Gardens.*

Bar. Start from the chase, my prey,
But as thou speed'st the hell-hounds of revenge
Pant in thy track and dog thee down.

[*Enter DE BERINGHEN, his mouth full, a napkin in
his hand.*

De Ber. Chevalier,
Your cook's a miracle,—what, my host gone?
Faith, count, my office is a post of danger—
A fiery fellow, Mauprat! touch and go,—
Match and saltpetre,—pr—r—r—r—!

Bar. You
Will be released ere long. The king resolves
To call the bride to court this day.

De Ber. Poor Mauprat!
Yet, since *you* love the lady, why so careless
Of the king's suit?

Bar. Because the lady's virtuous,
And the king timid. Ere he win the suit,
He'll lose the crown,—the bride will be a widow,—
And I—the Richelieu of the Regent Orleans.

De Ber. Is Louis still so chafed against the Fox
For snatching yon fair dainty from the Lion?

Bar. So chafed, that Richelieu totters. Yes, the king
Is half conspirator against the cardinal.
Enough of this. I've found the man we wanted,—
The man to head the hands that murder Richelieu,—
The man, whose name the synonym for daring.

De Ber. He must mean me! No, count; I am, I own,
A valiant dog—but still——

Bar. Whom can I mean
But Mauprat?—Mark, to-night we meet at Marion's.
There shall we sign; thence send this scroll [*showing it*] to
Bouillon.

You're in that secret [*affectionately*]*—one of our new
Council.*

De Ber. But to admit the Spaniard—France's foe—
Into the heart of France—dethrone the king—
It looks like treason, and I smell the headsman.

Bar. Oh, sir, too late to falter: when we meet
We must arrange the separate, coarser scheme,
For Richelieu's death. Of this despatch De Mauprat
Must nothing learn. He only bites at vengeance,
And he would start from treason.—We must post him
Without the door at Marion's—as a sentry.
[*Aside*]*—So, when his head is on the block—his tongue
Cannot betray our more august designs!*

De Ber. I'll meet you if the king can spare me.—
[*Aside.*] No!

I am too old a goose to play with foxes,
I'll roost at home. Meanwhile, in the next room
There's a delicious pâté,—let's discuss it.

Bar. Pshaw! a man fill'd with a sublime ambition
Has no time to discuss your pâtés.

De Ber. Pshaw!
And a man fill'd with as sublime a pâté
Has no time to discuss ambition.—Gad,
I have the best of it!

Enter JULIE hastily with first Courtier.

Julie [to Courtier]. A summons, sir,
To attend the Louvre?—On *this* day, too?

Cour. Madame,
The royal carriage waits below.—Messire [to DE BERIN-
GHEN]

You will return with us.

Julie. What can this mean?—
Where is my husband?

Bar. He has left the house,
Perhaps till nightfall—so he bade me tell you.
Alas, were I the lord of such fair treasure—

Julie [impatiently]. Till nightfall?—Strange—my heart
misgives me!

Cour. Madam,
My orders will not broke delay.

Julie [to BARADAS]. You'll see him—
And you will tell him!

Bar. From the flowers of Hybla
Never more gladly did the bee bear honey,
Than I take sweetness from those rosiest lips,
Though to the hive of others!

Cour. [to DE BERINGHEN]. Come, Messire.

De Ber. [hesitating]. One moment, just to—

Cour.

De Ber.

Come, sir.

I shall not

Discuss the pâté after all. 'Ecod,
I'm puzzled now. I don't know who's the best of it!

[*Exeunt JULIE, DE BERINGHEN, and Courtier.*]

Bar. Now will this fire his fever into madness!
All is made clear: Mauprat *must* murder Richelieu—
Die for that crime:—I shall console his Julia—

This will reach Bouillon!—from the wrecks of France
 I shall carve out—who knows—perchance a throne!
 All in despite of my Lord Cardinal.—

Enter DE MAUPRAT from the Gardens.

De Mau. Speak! can it be?—Methought, that from the
 terrace

I saw the carriage of the king—and Julie!
 No!—no!—my frenzy peoples the void air
 With its own phantoms!

Bar. Nay, too true.—Alas!
 Was ever lightning swifter, or more blasting,
 Than Richelieu's forked guile?

De Mau. I'll to the Louvre——

Bar. And lose all hope!—The Louvre!—the sure gate
 To the Bastile!

De Mau. The king——

Bar. Is but the wax,
 Which Richelieu stamps! Break the malignant seal,
 And I will rase the print. Come, man, take heart!
 Her virtue well could brave a sterner trial
 Than a few hours of cold imperious courtship.
 Were Richelieu *dust*—no danger!

De Mau. Ghastly Vengeance!
 To thee, and thine august and solemn sister,
 The unrelenting Death, I dedicate
 The blood of Armand Richelieu! When Dishonour
 Reaches our hearths Law dies and Murther takes
 The angel shape of Justice!

Bar. Bravely said!
 At midnight,—Marion's!—Nay, I cannot leave thee
 To thoughts that——

De Mau. Speak not to me!—I am yours!—
 But speak not! There's a voice within my soul,
 Whose cry could drown the thunder.—Oh! if men
 Will play dark sorcery with the heart of man,
 Let them, who raise the spell, beware the Fiend! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A room in the Palais Cardinal (as in the First Act).

RICHELIEU and JOSEPH.

FRANÇOIS *writing at a table.*

Joseph. Yes ;—Huguet, taking his accustom'd round,—
 Disguised as some plain burgher,—heard these rufflers
 Quoting your name :—he listen'd,—“ Pshaw,” said one,
 “ We are to seize the Cardinal in his palace
 To-morrow ! ”—“ How ? ” the other ask'd :—“ You'll hear
 The whole design to-night : the Duke of Orleans
 And Baradas have got the map of action
 At their fingers' end.”—“ So be it,” quoth the other,
 “ I will be there,—Marion de Lorme's—at midnight ! ”

Rich. I have them, man,—I have them !

Joseph. So they say
 Of you, my lord ;—believe me, that their plans
 Are mightier than you deem. You must employ
 Means no less vast to meet them !

Rich. Bah ! in policy
 We foil gigantic danger, not by giants,
 But dwarfs.—The statues of our stately fortune
 Are sculptured by the chisel—not the axe ! *
 Ah ! were I younger—by the knightly heart
 That beats beneath these priestly robes,† I would

* Richelieu not only employed the lowest, but would often consult men commonly esteemed the dullest. “ Il disait que dans des choses de très grande importance, il avait expérimenté, que les moins sages donnaient souvent les meilleurs expédients.”—*Le Clerc.*

† Both Richelieu and Joseph were originally intended for the profession of arms. Joseph had served before he obeyed the spiritual inspiration to become a Capuchin. The death of his brother opened to Richelieu the bishopric of Luçon ; but his military propensities were as strong as his priestly ambition. I need scarcely add that the cardinal, during his brilliant campaign in Italy, marched at the head of his troops in complete armour. It was under his administration that occurs the last example of proclaiming war by the chivalric defiance of herald and cartel. Richelieu valued himself much on his personal activity,—for his vanity was as universal as his ambition. A nobleman of the house of Grammont one day found him employed in *jumping*, and with all the *savoir vivre* of a Frenchman and a courtier, offered to jump against him. He suffered the cardinal to jump higher, and soon after found himself rewarded by an appointment. Yet, strangely enough, this

Have pastime with these cut-throats!—Yea,—as when
 Lured to the ambush of the expecting foe,—
 I clove my pathway through the plumed sea!
 Reach me yon falchion, François,—not that bauble
 For carpet-warriors,—yonder—such a blade
 As old Charles Martel might have wielded when
 He drove the Saracen from France.

[FRANÇOIS brings him one of the long two-handed
 swords worn in the middle ages.]

With this

I, at Rochelle, did hand to hand engage
 The stalwart Englisher,—no mongrels, boy,
 Those island mastiffs,—mark the notch—a deep one
 His casque made here,—I shore him to the waist!
 A toy—a feather—then! [Tries to wield, and lets it fall.]
 You see, a child could

Slay Richelieu now.

Fran. [his hand on his hilt]. But now, at your command
 Are other weapons, my good lord.

Rich. [who has seated himself as to write, lifts the pen].
 True,—THIS!

Beneath the rule of men entirely great
 The pen is mightier than the sword. Behold
 The arch-enchanter's wand!—itself a nothing!—
 But taking sorcery from the master-hand
 To paralyse the Cæsars—and to strike
 The loud earth breathless!—Take away the sword—
 States can be saved without it! [Looking on the clock.]
 'Tis the hour,—

Retire, sir.

[Exit FRANÇOIS.]

[A knock is heard. A door concealed in the arras
 opens cautiously. Enter MARION DE LORME.]

Joseph [amazed]. *Marion de Lorme!*

Rich.

Hist! Joseph!

Keep guard.

[JOSEPH retires to the principal entrance.]
 My faithful Marion!

Marion.

Good, my Lord,

vanity did not lead to a patronage injurious to the state; for never before in
 France was ability made so essential a requisite in promotion. He was
 lucky in finding the cleverest fellow among his adroitest flatterers.

They meet to-night in my poor house. The Duke
Of Orleans heads them.

Rich.

Yes, go on.

Marion.

His Highness

Much question'd if I knew some brave, discreet,
And vigilant man, whose tongue could keep a secret,
And who had those twin qualities for service,
The love of gold, the hate of Richelieu.—

Rich.

You?—

Marion. Made answer, "Yes—my brother;—bold and
trusty;

Whose faith, my faith could pledge;"—the Duke then
bade me

Have him equipp'd and arm'd—well mounted—ready
This night to part for Italy.

Rich.

Aha!—

Has Bouillon too turn'd traitor?—So, methought!—
What part of Italy?

Marion.

The Piedmont frontier,

Where Bouillon lies encamp'd.

Rich.

Now there is danger!

Great danger!—If he tamper with the Spaniard,
And Louis list not to my counsel, as,
Without sure proof, he will not,—France is lost.
What more?

Marion.

Dark hints of some design to seize
Your person in your palace. Nothing clear—
His Highness trembled while he spoke—the words
Did choke each other.

Rich.

So!—Who is the brother

You recommended to the Duke?

Marion.

Whoever

Your Eminence may father!—

Rich.

Darling Marion!*

[*Goes to the table, and returns with a large bag
of gold.*]

* Voltaire openly charges Richelieu with being the lover of Marion de Lorme; and the great poet of France, Victor Hugo, has sacrificed History to adorn her with qualities which were certainly not added to her personal charms. She was not less perfidious than beautiful. Le Clerc, properly, refutes the accusation of Voltaire against the discretion of Richelieu, and says, very justly, that if the great minister had the frailties of human nature, he learnt how to veil them,—at least when he obtained the scarlet. In earlier

There—pshaw—a trifle!—What an eye you have!
 And what a smile—child!—*[kisses her.]*—Ah! you fair
 perdition—
 'Tis well I'm old!

Marion [aside and seriously]. What a great man he is!

Rich. You are sure they meet?—the hour?

Marion. At midnight.

Rich. And

You will engage to give the Duke's Despatch
 To whom I send?

Marion. Ay, marry!

Rich. [aside]. Hugnet? No;
 He will be wanted elsewhere.—Joseph?—zealous,
 But too well known—too much the *elder* brother!
 Mauprat?—alas! it is his wedding-day!—
 François!—the Man of Men!—unnoted—young—
 Ambitious—*[Goes to the door.]*—François!

Enter FRANÇOIS.

Rich. Follow this fair lady;
 (Find him the suiting garments, Marion,) take
 My fleetest steed :—arm thyself to the teeth;
 A packet will be given you—with orders,
 No matter what!—The instant that your hand
 Closes upon it—clutch *it*, like your honour,
 Which Death alone can steal, or ravish—set
 Spurs to your steed—be breathless, till you stand
 Again before me.—Stay, sir!—You will find me
 Two short leagues hence—at Ruelle, in my castle.
 Young man, be blithe!—for—note me—from the hour
 I grasp that packet—think your guardian Star
 Rains fortune on you!—

Fran. If I fail—

Rich. Fail—fail!

In the lexicon of youth, which Fate reserves
 For a bright manhood, there is no such word
 As—*fail*!—(You will instruct him further, Marion)
 Follow her—but at distance;—speak not to her,

life he had been prone to gallantries which a little prepossessed the king
 (who was formal and decorous, and threw a singular coldness into the few
 attachments he permitted to himself), against the aspiring intriguer. But
 these gayer occupations died away in the engagement of higher pursuits or
 of darker passions.

Till you are housed.—Farewell, boy! Never say
“Fail” again.

Fran. I will not!

Rich. [*patting his locks*]. There’s my young hero!—
[*Exeunt FRANÇOIS, MARION.*]

Rich. So, they would seize my person in this palace?—
I cannot guess their scheme;—but my retinue
Is here too large!—a single traitor could
Strike impotent the faith of thousands;—Joseph,
Art sure of Huguet?—Think—we hang’d his Father!

Joseph. But you have bought the Son;—heap’d favours
on him!

Rich. Trash!—favours past—that’s nothing.—In his
hours

Of confidence with you, has he named the favours
To come—he counts on?

Joseph. Yes:—a Colonel’s rank,
And Letters of Nobility.

Rich. What Huguet!—

[*Here HUGUET enters, as to address the CARDINAL,
who does not perceive him.*]

Hug. My own name, soft—[*glides behind the screen*].

Rich. Colonel and Nobleman!

My bashful Huguet—that can never be!—

We have him not the less—we’ll *promise it*!

And see the King withholds!—Ah, kings are oft
A great convenience to a minister!

No wrong to Huguet either;—Moralists

Say, Hope is sweeter than Possession!—Yes!—

We’ll count on Huguet! Favours *past* do gorge

Our dogs! leave service drowsy—dull the scent,

Slacken the speed;—favours *to come*, my Joseph,

Produce a lusty, hungry gratitude,

A ravenous zeal, that of the commonest cur

Would make a Cerberus.—You are right, this treason

Assumes a fearful aspect:—but once crush’d,

Its very ashes shall manure the soil

Of power; and ripen such full sheaves of greatness,

That all the summer of my fate shall seem

Fruitless beside the autumn!

[*HUGUET holds up his hand menacingly, and creeps
out.*]

Joseph. The saints grant it !
Rich. [solemnly]. Yes—for sweet France, Heaven grant
 it !—O my country,
 For thee—thee only—though men deem it not—
 Are toil and terror my familiars !—I
 Have made thee great and fair—upon thy brows
 Wreath'd the old Roman laurel :—at thy feet
 Bow'd nations down.—No pulse in my ambition
 Whose beatings were not measured from thy heart !
 [In the old times before us, patriots lived
 And died for liberty—

Joseph. As you would live
 And die for despotry—

Rich. False monk, not so,
 But for the purple and the power wherein
 State clothes herself.—I love my native land
 Not as Venetian, Englisher, or Swiss,
 But as a Noble and a Priest of France ;
 “ All things for France ”—lo, my eternal maxim !
 The vital axle of the restless wheels
 That bear me on ! With her I have entwined
 My passions and my fate—my crimes—my virtues—
 Hated and loved,* and schemed, and shed men's blood,

* Richelieu did in fact so thoroughly associate himself with the State, that in cases where the extreme penalty of the law had been incurred, Le Clerc justly observes that he was more inexorable to those he had favoured—even to his own connections—than to other and more indifferent offenders. It must be remembered, as some excuse for his unrelenting sternness, that before his time the great had been accustomed to commit any disorder with impunity, even the crime of treason ;—“ auparavant on ne faisoit poser les armes aux rebelles qu'en leur accordant quelque récompense.” On entering into the administration, he therefore laid it down as a maxim necessary to the existence of the State, that “ no crime should be committed with impunity.” To carry out this maxim, the long-established license to crime made even justice seem cruel. But the victims most commiserated, from their birth or accomplishments, as Montmorenci, or Cinq Mars, were traitors in actual conspiracy against their country, and would have forfeited life in any land where the punishment of death existed, and the lawgiver was strong enough to vindicate the law. Richelieu was, in fact, a patriot unsoftened by philanthropy. As in Venice (where the favourite aphorism was—“ Venice first, Christianity next,”*) so, with Richelieu, the primary consideration was, “ What will be best for the country ? ” He had no abstract principle, whether as a politician or a priest, when applied to the world that lay beyond the boundaries of France. Thus he, whose object was to found in France a splendid and imperious despotism, assisted the Parlia-

* “ Pria Veneziana, poi Christiane.”

As the calm crafts of Tuscan Sages teach
 Those who would make their country great. Beyond
 The map of France—my heart can travel not,
 But fills that limit to its farthest verge;
 And while I live—Richelieu and France are one.]
 We Priests, to whom the Church forbids in youth
 The plighted one—to manhood's toil denies
 The soother helpmate—from our wither'd age
 Shuts the sweet blossoms of the second spring
 That smiles in the name of Father—we are yet
 Not holier than Humanity, and must
 Fulfil Humanity's condition—Love!
 Debarred the Actual, we but breathe a life
 To the chill Marble of the Ideal—Thus,
 In thy unseen and abstract Majesty,
 My France, my Country, I have bodied forth
 A thing to love. What are these robes of state,
 This pomp, this palace? perishable baubles!
 In this world two things only are immortal—
 Fame and a People!

Enter HUGUET.

Hug. My Lord Cardinal,
 Your Eminence bade me seek you at this hour.

Rich. Did I?—True, Huguet.—So—you overheard
 Strange talk amongst these gallants? Snares and traps
 For Richelieu?—Well—we'll balk them; let me think—
 The men-at-arms you head—how many?

mentary party in England, and signed a treaty of alliance and subsidies with the Catalan rebels, for the establishment of a republic in Barcelona: to convulse other monarchies was to consolidate the growing monarchy of France. So he, who completely crushed the Protestant party at home, braved all the wrath of the Vatican, and even the resentment of the King, in giving the most essential aid to the Protestants abroad. There was, indeed, a largeness of view in his hostility to the French Huguenots, which must be carefully distinguished from the intolerance of the mere priest. He opposed them, not as a Catholic, but as a statesman. The Huguenots were strong republicans, and had formed plans for dividing France into provincial commonwealths; and the existence of Rochelle was absolutely incompatible with the integrity of the French monarchy. It was a second capital, held by the Huguenots, claiming independent authority and the right to treat with foreign powers. Richelieu's final conquest was marked by a humanity that had nothing of the bigot. The Huguenots obtained a complete amnesty, and had only to regret the loss of privileges and fortifications which could not have existed with any security to the rest of France.

Hug. My Lord. Twenty,*

Rich. All trusty ?

Hug. Yes, for ordinary
Occasions—if for great ones, I would change
Three-fourths at least.

Rich. Ay, what are great occasions ?

Hug. Great bribes !

Rich. [to JOSEPH]. Good lack, he knows some paragons
Superior to great bribes !

Hug. True Gentlemen
Who have transgress'd the laws—and value life
And lack not gold ;—your Eminence alone
Can grant them pardon. *Ergo*, you can trust them !

Rich. Logic !—So be it—let this *honest* twenty
Be arm'd and mounted.—[*Aside.*] So they meet at mid-
night,
The attempt on me to-morrow—Ho ! we'll strike
'Twixt wind and water.—[*Aloud.*] Does it need much
time

To find these ornaments to Human Nature ?

Hug. My Lord—the trustiest of them are not birds
That love the daylight.—I do know a haunt
Where they meet nightly—

Rich. Ere the dawn be grey,
All could be arm'd, assembled, and at Ruelle
In my old hall ?

Hug. By one hour after midnight.

Rich. The castle's strong. You know its outlets,
Huguet ?

Would twenty men, well posted, keep such guard
That not one step—(and Murther's step is stealthy)—
Could glide within—unseen ?

Hug. A triple wall—
A drawbridge and portcullis—twenty men
Under my lead, a month might hold that castle
Against a host.

* The guard attached to Richelieu's person was, in the first instance, fifty arquebusiers, afterwards increased to two companies of cavalry and two hundred musqueteers. Huguet is therefore to be considered merely as the lieutenant of a small detachment of this little army. In point of fact, the subdivisions of the guard took it in turns to serve.

Rich. They do not strike till morning,
Yet I will shift the quarter—Bid the grooms
Prepare the litter—I will hence to Ruelle
While daylight last—and one hour after midnight
You and your twenty saints shall seek me thither!
You're made to rise!—You are, sir;—eyes of lynx,
Ears of the stag, a footfall like the snow;
You are a valiant fellow;—yea, a trusty,
Religious, exemplary, incorrupt,
And precious jewel of a fellow, Huguet!
If I live long enough,—ay, mark my words—
If I live long enough, you'll be a Colonel—
Noble, perhaps!—One hour, sir, after midnight.

Hug. You leave me dumb with gratitude, my Lord;
I'll pick the trustiest—[*aside.*] Marion's house can furnish!
[*Exit* HUGUET.]

Rich. How like a spider shall I sit in my hole,
And watch the meshes tremble.

Joseph. But, my Lord,
Were it not wiser still to man the palace,
And seize the traitors in the act?

Rich. No; Louis,
Long chafed against me—Julie stolen from him,
Will rouse him more. He'll say I hatch'd the treason,
Or scout my charge:—He half desires my death;
But the despatch to Bouillon, some dark scheme
Against *his* crown—*there* is our weapon, Joseph;
With that, all safe—without it, all his peril!
Meanwhile to my old castle; *you* to court,
Diving with careless eyes into men's hearts,
As ghostly churchmen should do! See the King,
Bid him peruse that sage and holy treatise,
Wherein 'tis set forth how a Premier should
Be chosen from the Priesthood—how the King
Should never listen to a single charge
Against his servant, nor conceal one whisper
That the rank envies of a court distil
Into his ear—to fester the fair name
Of my—I mean his Minister!—Oh! Joseph,
A most convincing treatise.*

* This tract, on the "Unity of the Minister," contains all the doctrines,
and many more to the same effect, referred to in the text, and had a pro-

Good—all favours,
If François be but bold, and Huguet honest.
Huguet—I half suspect—he bow'd too low—
'Tis not his way.

Joseph. This is the curse, my Lord,
Of your high state;—suspicion of all men.

Rich. [sadly]. True;—true;—my leeches bribed to
poisoners;—pages
To strangle me in sleep.—My very King
(This brain the unresting loom, from which was woven
The purple of his greatness) leagued against me.
Old—childless—friendless—broken—all forsake—
All—all—but—

Joseph. What ?

Rich. The indomitable heart
Of Armand Richelieu !

Joseph. Nought beside ?

Rich. Why, Julie,
My own dear foster-child, forgive me ;—yes ;
This morning, shining through their happy tears,
Thy soft eyes bless'd me !—and thy Lord,—in danger,
He would forsake me not.

Joseph. And Joseph——

Rich. [after a pause.] You—
Yes, I believe you—yes—for all men fear you
And the world loves you not. And I, friend Joseph,
I am the only man who could, my Joseph,
Make you a Bishop.* Come, we'll go to dinner,
And talk the while of methods to advance
Our Mother Church.† Ah, Joseph,—*Bishop Joseph !*

digious influence on the conscience of the poor King. At the onset of his career, Richelieu, as deputy of the clergy of Poitou, complained in his harangue to the King that ecclesiastics were too rarely summoned to the royal councils, and invoked the example of the Druids.

* Joseph's ambition was not, however, so moderate; he refused a bishopric, and desired the cardinal's hat, for which favour Richelieu openly supplicated the Holy See, but contrived somehow or other never to effect it, although two ambassadors applied for it at Rome.

† The peculiar religion of Père Joseph may be illustrated by the following anecdote:—An officer, whom he had dismissed upon an expedition into Germany, moved by conscience at the orders he had received, returned for further explanations, and found the Capuchin *disant sa messe*. He approached and whispered, "But, my father, if these people defend themselves—" "Kill all" (*Qu'en tue tout*), answered the good father, continuing his devotions.

ACT III.

SECOND DAY (MIDNIGHT).

SCENE I.—RICHELIEU'S *Castle at Ruelle. A Gothic Chamber. Moonlight at the window, occasionally obscured.*

*Rich. [reading].** "In silence, and at night, the Conscience feels

That life should soar to nobler ends than Power."

So sayest thou, sage and sober moralist!

But wert thou tried? Sublime Philosophy,

Thou art the Patriarch's ladder, reaching heaven,

And bright with beck'ning angels—but, alas!

We see thee, like the Patriarch, but in dreams,

By the first step—dull-slumbering on the earth.

I am not happy!—with the Titan's lust

I woo'd a goddess, and I clasp a cloud.

When I am dust, my name shall, like a star,

Shine through wan space, a glory—and a prophet

Whereby pale seers shall from their æry towers

Con all the ominous signs, benign or evil,

That make the potent astrologue of kings.

But shall the Future judge me by the ends

That I have wrought—or by the dubious means

Through which the stream of my renown hath run

Into the many-voiced unfathom'd Time?

Foul in its bed lie weeds—and heaps of slime,

And with its waves—when sparkling in the sun,

Oftimes the secret rivulets that swell

Its might of waters—blend the hues of blood.

Yet are my sins not those of CIRCUMSTANCE,

* I need not say that the great length of this soliloquy adapts it only for the closet, and that but few of the lines are retained on the stage. To the reader, however, the passages omitted in representation will not, perhaps, be the most uninteresting in the play, and may be deemed necessary to the completion of the Cardinal's portrait,—action on the stage supplying so subtly the place of words in the closet. The self-assured sophistries which, in the text, mingle with Richelieu's better-founded arguments, in apology for the darker traits of his character, are to be found scattered throughout the writings ascribed to him. The reader will observe that in this self-confession lies the latent poetical justice, which separates happiness from success.

That all-pervading atmosphere, wherein
 Our spirits, like the unsteady lizard, take
 The tints that colour, and the food that nurtures ?
 * O ! ye, whose hour-glass shifts its tranquil sands
 In the unvex'd silence of a student's cell ;
 Ye, whose untempted hearts have never toss'd
 Upon the dark and stormy tides where life
 Gives battle to the elements,—and man
 Wrestles with man for some slight plank, whose weight
 Will bear but one—while round the desperate wretch
 The hungry billows roar—and the fierce Fate,
 Like some huge monster, dim-seen through the surf,
 Waits him who drops ;—ye safe and formal men,
 Who write the deeds, and with unfeverish hand
 Weigh in nice scales the motives of the Great,
 Ye cannot know what ye have never tried !
 History preserves only the fleshless bones
 Of what we are—and by the mocking skull
 The would-be wise pretend to guess the features !
 Without the roundness and the glow of life
 How hideous is the skeleton ! Without
 The colourings and humanities that clothe
 Our errors, the anatomists of schools
 Can make our memory hideous !

I have wrought

Great uses out of evil tools—and they
 In the time to come may bask beneath the light
 Which I have stolen from the angry gods,
 And warn their sons against the glorious theft,
 Forgetful of the darkness which it broke.
 I have shed blood—but I have had no foes
 Save those the State had †—if my wrath was deadly,
 'Tis that I felt my country in my veins,
 And smote her sons as Brutus smote his own. ‡
 And yet I am not happy—blanch'd and sear'd
 Before my time—breathing an air of hate,
 And seeing daggers in the eyes of men,

* Retained in representation.

† It is well known that when, on his death-bed, Richelieu was asked if he forgave his enemies; he replied, "I never had any, but those of the State." And this was true enough, for Richelieu and the State were one.

‡ Richelieu's vindication of himself from cruelty will be found in various parts of Petitot's Collection vols. xxi. xxx. (*bis*).

And wasting powers that shake the thrones of earth
 In contest with the insects—bearding kings
 And braved by lackies*—murder at my bed;
 And lone amidst the multitudinous web,
 With the dread Three—that are the Fates who hold
 The woof and shears—the Monk, the Spy, the Headsman.
 And this is power? Alas! I am not happy.

[*After a pause.*]

And yet the Nile is fretted by the weeds
 Its rising roots not up; but never yet
 Did one least barrier by a ripple vex
 My onward tide, unswept in sport away.
 Am I so ruthless then that I do hate
 Them who hate me? Tush, tush! I do not hate;
 Nay, I forgive. The Statesman writes the doom,
 But the Priest sends the blessing. I forgive them,
 But I destroy; forgiveness is mine own,
 Destruction is the State's! For private life,
 Scripture the guide—for public, Machiavel.
 Would fortune serve me if the Heaven were wroth?
 For chance makes half my greatness. I was born
 Beneath the aspect of a bright-eyed star,
 And my triumphant adamant of soul
 Is but the fix'd persuasion of success.
 Ah!—here!—that spasm!—again!—How Life and Death
 Do wrestle for me momentarily! And yet
 The King looks pale. I shall outlive the King!
 And then, thou insolent Austrian—who didst gibe
 At the ungainly, gaunt, and daring lover,†

* Voltaire has a striking passage on the singular fate of Richelieu, recalled every hour from his gigantic schemes to frustrate some miserable cabal of the ante-room. Richelieu would often exclaim, that "Six pieds de terre," as he called the king's cabinet, "lui donnaient plus de peine que tout le reste de l'Europe." The death of Wallenstein, sacrificed by the Emperor Ferdinand, produced a most lively impression upon Richelieu. He found many traits of comparison between Ferdinand and Louis—Wallenstein and himself. In the *Memoirs*—now regarded by the best authorities as written by his sanction, and in great part by himself—the great Frenchman bursts (when alluding to Wallenstein's murder) into a touching and pathetic anathema on the *misère de cette vie* of dependence on jealous and timid royalty, which he himself, while he wrote, sustained. It is worthy of remark, that it was precisely at the period of Wallenstein's death that Richelieu obtained from the king an augmentation of his guard.

† Richelieu was commonly supposed, though I cannot say I find much evidence for it, to have been too presuming in an interview with Anne of

Sleeking thy looks to silken Buckingham,—
 Thou shalt—no matter!—I have outlived love.
 O! beautiful—all golden—gentle youth!
 Making thy palace in the careless front
 And hopeful eye of man—ere yet the soul
 Hath lost the memories which (so Plato dream'd)
 Breathed glory from the earlier star it dwelt in—
 Oh! for one gale from thine exulting morning,
 Stirring amidst the roses, where of old
 Love shook the dew-drops from his glancing hair!
 Could I recall the past—or had not set
 The prodigal treasures of the bankrupt soul
 In one slight bark upon the shoreless sea;
 The yoked steer, after his day of toil,
 Forgets the goad, and rests—to me alike
 Or day or night—Ambition has no rest!
 Shall I resign?—who can resign himself?
 For custom is ourself; as drink and food
 Become our bone and flesh—the aliments
 Nurturing our nobler part, the mind—thoughts, dreams,
 Passions, and aims, in the revolving cycle
 Of the great alchemy—at length are made
 Our mind itself; and yet the sweets of leisure—
 An honour'd home—far from these base intrigues—
 An eyrie on the heaven-kiss'd heights of wisdom—
[Taking up the book.]
 Speak to me, moralist!—I'll heed thy counsel.
 Were it not best——

Enter FRANÇOIS hastily, and in part disguised.

Rich. [*flinging away the book*]. Philosophy, thou liest!
 Quick—the despatch! Power—Empire! Boy—the
 packet!

Fran. Kill me, my Lord.

Rich. They knew thee—they suspected—
 They gave it not——

Fran. He gave it—*he*—the Count
 De Baradas—with his own hand he gave it!

Rich. Baradas! Joy! out with it!

Austria (the Queen), and to have bitterly resented the contempt she expressed for him. The Duke of Buckingham's frantic and Quixotic passion for the Queen is well known.

Fran. Listen,
And then dismiss me to the headsman.

Rich. Ha !
Go on.

Fran. They led me to a chamber—There
Orleans and Baradas, and some half-score,
Whom I know not—were met—

Rich. Not more !

Fran. But from

The adjoining chamber broke the din of voices,
The clattering tread of arm'd men ; at times
A shriller cry, that yell'd out, "Death to Richelieu !"

Rich. Speak not of me : thy country is in danger !
The adjoining room—So, so—a separate treason !
The one thy ruin, France !—the meaner crime,
Left to their tools, my murder !

Fran. Baradas
Question'd me close—demurr'd—until, at last,
O'erruled by Orleans,—gave the packet—told me
That life and death were in the scroll—this gold—

Rich. Gold is no proof—

Fran. And Orleans promised thousands,
When Bouillon's trumpets in the streets of Paris
Rang out shrill answer. Hastening from the house,
My footstep in the stirrup, Marion stole
Across the threshold, whispering, "Lose no moment
Ere Richelieu have the packet : tell him too—
Murder is in the winds of Night, and Orleans
Swears, ere the dawn the Cardinal shall be clay."
She said, and trembling fled within ; when, lo !
A hand of iron griped me ; through the dark
Gleam'd the dim shadow of an arm'd man :
Ere I could draw—the prize was wrested from me,
And a hoarse voice gasp'd—"Spy, I spare thee, for
This steel is virgin to thy Lord !" with that
He vanish'd.—Scared and trembling for thy safety
I mounted, fled, and kneeling at thy feet,
Implore thee to acquit my faith—but not,
Like him, to spare my life.

Rich. Who spake of life ?
I bade thee grasp that treasure as thine honour—
A jewel worth whole hecatombs of lives !

Begone!—redeem thine honour—back to Marion—
 Or Baradas—or Orleans—track the robber—
 Regain the packet—or crawl on to Age—
 Age and grey hairs like mine—and know, thou hast lost
 That which had made thee great and saved thy country.—
 See me not till thou'st bought the right to seek me.—
 Away!—Nay, cheer thee, thou hast not fail'd yet,—
There's no such word as "fail!"

Fran. Bless you, my Lord,
 For that one smile!—I'll wear it on my heart
 To light me back to triumph.*

[*Exit.*

Rich. The poor youth!
 An elder had ask'd life!—I love the young!
 For as great men live not in their own time,
 But the next race,—so in the young, my soul
 Makes many Richelieus. He will win it yet.
 François!—He's gone. My murder! Marion's warning!
 This bravo's threat! Oh for the morrow's dawn!
 I'll set my spies to work—I'll make all space
 (As does the sun) a Universal Eye—
 Huguet shall track—Joseph confess—ha! ha!
 Strange, while I laugh'd I shudder'd—and ev'n now
 Through the chill air the beating of my heart
 Sounds like a death-watch by a sick man's pillow;
 If Huguet *could* deceive me—hoofs without—
 The gates uncloset—steps near and nearer!

Enter JULIE.

Julie. Cardinal!
 My father! [*Falls at his feet.*

Rich. Julie at this hour!—and tears!
 What ails thee?

Julie. I am safe; I am with thee!—
Rich. Safe! why in all the storms of this wide world
 What wind would mar the violet?

Julie. That man—
 Why did I love him?—clinging to a breast

* The fear and the hatred which Richelieu generally inspired were not shared by his dependents and those about his person, who are said "to have adored him."—"Ses domestiques le regardaient comme le meilleur des maîtres."—*Le Clerc*. In fact, although "*Il étoit orgueilleux et colère,*"—he was "*en même temps, affable et plein de douceur dans l'abord;*" and he was no less generous to those who served than severe to those who opposed him.

That knows no shelter?

Listen—late at noon—
The marriage-day—ev'n then no more a lover—
He left me coldly,—well,—I sought my chamber
To weep and wonder—but to hope and dream.
Sudden a mandate from the King—to attend
Forthwith his pleasure at the Louvre.

Rich. Ha!
You did obey the summons; and the King
Reproach'd your hasty nuptials.

Julie. Were that all!
He frown'd and chid; proclaim'd the bond unlawful:
Bade me not quit my chamber in the palace,
And there at night—alone—this night—all still—
He sought my presence—dared—thou read'st the heart,
Read mine!—I cannot speak it!

Rich. He a king,—
You—woman; well—you yielded!

Julie. Cardinal—
Dare you say “yielded?”—Humbled and abash'd,
He from the chamber crept—this Mighty Louis;
Crept like a baffled felon!—yielded! Ah!
More royalty in woman's honest heart
Than dwells within the crown'd majesty
And sceptred anger of a hundred kings!
Yielded!—Heavens!—yielded!

Rich. To my breast,—close—close!
The world would never need a Richelieu, if
Men—bearded, mail'd men—the Lords of Earth—
Resisted flattery, falsehood, avarice, pride,
As this poor child with the dove's innocent scorn
Her sex's tempters, Vanity and Power!—
He left you—well!

Julie. Then came a sharper trial!
At the King's suit the Count de Baradas
Sought me to soothe, to fawn, to flatter, while
On his smooth lip insult appear'd more hateful
For the false mask of pity: letting fall
Dark hints of treachery, with a world of sighs
That Heaven had granted to so base a Lord
The heart whose coldest friendship were to him
What Mexico to Misers! Stung at last

By my disdain, the dim and glimmering sense
 Of his cloak'd words broke into bolder light,
 And THEN—ah! then, my haughty spirit fail'd me!
 Then I was weak—wept—oh! such bitter tears!
 For (turn thy face aside and let me whisper
 The horror to thine ear) then did I learn
 That he—that Adrien—that my husband—knew
 The King's polluting suit, and deem'd it *honour!*
 Then all the terrible and loathsome truth
 Glared on me;—coldness—waywardness, reserve—
 Mystery of looks—words—all unravell'd,—and
 I saw the impostor, where I had loved the god!

Rich. I think thou wrong'st thy husband—but proceed.

Julie. Did you say, "wrong'd" him?—Cardinal, my father,

Did you say "wrong'd?" Prove it, and life shall grow
 One prayer for thy reward and his forgiveness.

Rich. Let me know all.

Julie.

To the despair he caused
 The courtier left me; but amid the chaos
 Darted one guiding ray—to 'scape—to fly—
 Reach Adrien, learn the worst—'twas then near midnight:
 Trembling I left my chamber—sought the Queen—
 Fell at her feet—reveal'd the unholy peril—
 Implored her aid to flee our joint disgrace.
 Moved, she embraced and soothed me; nay, preserved;
 Her word sufficed to unlock the palace-gates:
 I hasten'd home—but home was desolate,—
 No Adrien there! Fearing the worst, I fled
 To thee, directed hither. As my wheels
 Paused at thy gates—the clang of arms behind—
 The ring of hoofs—

Rich.

'Twas but my guards, fair trembler.
 (So Huguet keeps his word, my omens wrong'd him.)

Julie. Oh, in one hour what years of anguish crowd!

Rich. Nay, there's no danger now. Thou needest rest.
 Come, thou shalt lodge beside me. Tush! be cheer'd,
 My rosiest Amazon—thou wrong'st thy Theseus.
 All will be well—yes, yet all well.

[*Exeunt through a side door.*]

SCENE II.

*Enter HUGUET—DE MAUPRAT, in complete armour, his visor down.
The moonlight obscured at the casement.*

Hug.

Not here!

De Mau. Oh, I will find him, fear not. Hence and guard
The galleries where the menials sleep—plant sentries
At every outlet—Chance should throw no shadow
Between the vengeance and the victim! Go!—
Ere yon brief vapour that obscures the moon,
As doth our deed pale conscience, pass away,
The mighty shall be ashes.

Hug.

Will you not

A second arm?

De Mau.

To slay one weak old man?—

Away! No lesser wrongs than mine can make
This murder lawful. Hence!

Hug.

A short farewell!

[*Exit HUGUET.*]

Re-enter RICHELIEU [not perceiving DE MAUPRAT].

Rich. How heavy is the air!—the vestal lamp
Of the sad Moon, weary with vigil, dies
In the still temple of the solemn heaven!
The very darkness lends itself to fear—
To treason——

De Mau. And to death!

Rich.

My omens lied not!

What art thou, wretch?

De Mau.

Thy doomsman!

Rich.

Ho, my guards!

Huguet! Montbrassil! Vermont!

De Mau.

Ay, thy spirits

Forsake thee, wizard; thy bold men of mail
Are my confederates. Stir not! but one step,
And know the next—thy grave!

Rich.

Thou liest, knave!

I am old, infirm—most feeble—but thou liest!

Armand de Richelieu dies not by the hand

Of man—the stars have said it*—and the voice
 Of my own prophet and oracular soul
 Confirms the shining Sibyls ! Call them all
 Thy brother butchers ! Earth has no such fiend—
 No ! as one parricide of his father-land,
 Who dares in Richelieu murder France !

De Mau.

Thy stars

Deceive thee, Cardinal ; thy soul of wiles
 May against kings and armaments avail,
 And mock the embattled world ; but powerless now
 Against the sword of one resolvèd man,
 Upon whose forehead thou hast written shame !

Rich. I breathe ; he is not a hireling. Have I wrong'd thee ?

Beware surmise—suspicion—lies ! I am
 Too great for men to speak the truth of me !

De Mau. Thy *acts* are thy accusers, Cardinal !

In his hot youth, a soldier, urged to crime
 Against the State, placed in your hands his life ;—
 You did not strike the blow—but o'er his head,
 Upon the gossamer thread of your caprice,
 Hover'd the axe. His the brave spirit's hell,
 The twilight terror of suspense ;—your death
 Had set him free ; he purposed not, nor pray'd it.
 One day you summon'd—mock'd him with smooth pardon—
 Shower'd wealth upon him—bade an angel's face
 Turn Earth to Paradise——

Rich.

Well !

De Mau.

Was this mercy ?

A Cæsar's generous vengeance ?—Cardinal, no !
 Judas, not Cæsar, was the model ! You
 Saved him from death for shame ; reserved to grow
 The scorn of living men—to his dead sires
 Leprous reproach—scoff of the age to come—
 A kind convenience—a Sir Pandarus
 To his own bride, and the august adulterer !
 Then did the first great law of human hearts,
 Which with the patriot's, not the rebel's, name
 Crown'd the first Brutus, when the Tarquin fell,

* In common with his contemporaries, Richelieu was credulous in astrology and less lawful arts. He was too fortunate a man not to be superstitious.

Make Misery royal—raise this desperate wretch
Into thy destiny! Expect no mercy!

Behold De Mauprat!

[*Lifts his vizor.*]

Rich.

To thy knees, and crawl!

For pardon; or, I tell thee, thou shalt live

For such remorse, that, did I hate thee, I

Would bid thee strike, that I might be avenged!

It was to save my Julie from the King,

That in thy valour I forgave thy crime;—

It was, when thou—the rash and ready tool—

Yea, of that shame thou loath'st—didst leave thy hearth

To the polluter—in these arms thy bride

Found the protecting shelter thine withheld.

[*Goes to the side door.*]

Julie de Mauprat—Julie!

Enter JULIE.

Lo! my witness!

De Mau. What marvel's this?—I dream! my Julie—
thou!

This, thy beloved hand?

Julie.

Henceforth all bond

Between us twain is broken. Were it not

For this old man, I might, in truth, have lost

The right—now mine—to scorn thee!

Rich.

So, you hear her?

De Mau. Thou with some slander hast her sense infected!

Julie. No, sir; he did excuse thee in despite

Of all that wears the face of truth. Thy friend—

Thy confidant—familiar—*Baradas*—

Himself reveal'd thy baseness.

De Mau.

Baseness!

Rich.

Ay;

That thou didst *court* dishonour.

De Mau.

Baradas!

Where is thy thunder, Heaven?—Duped!—snared!—
undone!

Thou—thou couldst not believe him! Thou dost love me!
Love cannot feed upon falsehoods!

Julie [*aside*].

Love him!—Ah!

Be still, my heart! [*Aloud.*] Love you I did:—how fondly,
Woman—if women were my listeners now—

Alone could tell !—For ever fled my dream :
Farewell—all's over !

Rich. Nay, my daughter, these
Are but the blinding mists of day-break love
Sprung from its very light, and heralding
A noon of happy summer.—Take her hand
And speak the truth, with which your heart runs over—
That this Count Judas—this Incarnate Falsehood—
Never lied more, than when he told thy Julie
That Adrien loved her not—except, indeed,
When he told Adrien, Julie could betray him.

Julie [*embracing DE MAUPRAT*]. You love me, then !—
you love me !—and they wrong'd you !

De Mau. Ah ! couldst thou doubt it ?

Rich. Why, the very mole
Less blind than thou ! Baradas loves thy wife ;—
Had hoped her hand—aspired to be that cloak
To the King's will, which to thy bluntness seems
The Centaur's poisonous robe—hopes even now
To make thy corpse his footstool to thy bed !
Where was thy wit, man ?—Ho ! these schemes are glass !
The very sun shines through them.

De Mau. O, my Lord.
Can you forgive me ?

Rich. Ay, and save you !

De Mau. Save !—
Terrible word !—O, save *thyself* ;—these halls
Swarm with thy foes : already for thy blood
Pants thirsty Murder !

Julie. Murder !

Rich. Hush ! put by
The woman. Hush ! a shriek—a cry—a breath
Too loud, would startle from its horrent pause
The swooping Death ! Go to the door, and listen !—
Now for escape !

De Mau. None—none ! Their blades shall pass
This heart to thine.

Rich [*drily*]. An honourable outwork
But much too near the citadel. I think
That I can trust you now [*slowly, and gazing on him*] :—
yes ; I can trust you.
How many of my troop league with you ?

De Mau.

All!—

We are your troop!

Rich.

And Huguet?

De Mau.

Is our captain.

Rich. A retributive Power!—This comes of spies!

All? then the lion's skin 's too short to-night,—

Now for the fox's!—

Julie.

A hoarse, gathering murmur!—

Hurrying and heavy footsteps!

Rich.

Ha!—the posterns?

De Mau. No egress where no sentry!

Rich.

Follow me—

I have it!—to my chamber—quick! Come, Julie!

Hush! Mauprat, come!

[*Murmur at a distance.*]—Death to the Cardinal!

Rich. Bloodhounds, I laugh at ye!—ha! ha!—we will
Baffle them yet.—Ha!—ha!

[*Exeunt JULIE, MAUPRAT, RICHELIEU.*]

Hug. [*without*].

This way—this way!

SCENE III.

Enter HUGUET and the Conspirators.

Hug. De Mauprat's hand is never slow in battle;—
Strange, if it falter now! Ha! gone!

First Con.

Perchance

The fox had crept to rest; and to his lair
Death, the dark hunter, tracks him.

[*Enter MAUPRAT, throwing open the doors of the recess,
in which a bed, whereon RICHELIEU lies extended.*]

De Mau.

Live the King!

Richelieu is dead!

Hug. [*advancing towards the recess; MAUPRAT following,
his hand on his dagger*]. Are his eyes open?

De Mau.

Ay,

As if in life!

Hug. [*turning back*]. I will not look on him.
You have been long.

De Mau. I watch'd him till he slept.
 Heed me.—No trace of blood reveals the deed ;—
 Strangled in sleep. His health hath long been broken—
 Found breathless in his bed. So runs our tale,
 Remember ! Back to Paris—Orleans gives
 Ten thousand crowns, and Baradas a lordship,
 To him who first gluts vengeance with the news
 That Richelieu is in heaven ! Quick, that all France
 May share your joy !

Hug. And you ?

De Mau. Will stay, to crush
 Eager suspicion—to forbid sharp eyes
 To dwell too closely on the clay ; prepare
 The rites, and place him on his bier—this *my* task.
 I leave to you, sirs, the more grateful lot
 Of wealth and honours. Hence !

Hug. I shall be noble !

De Mau. Away !

First Con. Five thousand crowns !

Omnes. To horse !—to horse ! [Exeunt Conspirators.]

SCENE IV.

Still night—A room in the house of COUNT DE BARADAS, lighted, &c.

ORLEANS and DE BERINGHEN.

De Ber. I understand. Mauprat kept guard without :
 Knows nought of the despatch—but heads the troop
 Whom the poor Cardinal fancies his protectors.
 Save us from such protection !

Orle. Yet, if Huguet,
 By whose advice and proffers we renounced
 Our earlier scheme, should still be Richelieu's minion,
 And play us false—

De Ber. The fox must then devour
 The geese he gripes (I'm out of it, thank Heaven !)
 And you must swear you smelt the trick, but seem'd
 To approve the deed—to render up the doers.

Enter BARADAS.

Bar. Julie is fled :—the King, whom now I left

To a most thorny pillow, vows revenge
 On her—on Mauprat—and on Richelieu! Well;
 We loyal men anticipate his wish
 Upon the last—and as for Mauprat,— [Showing a writ.

De Ber.

Hum!

They say the devil invented printing! Faith,
 He has some hand in writing parchment—eh, Count?
 What mischief now?

Bar.

The King, at Julie's flight

Enraged, will brook no rival in a subject—
 So on this old offence—the affair of Faviaux—
 Ere Mauprat can tell tales of us, we build
 His bridge between the dungeon and the grave.

Orle. Well; if our courier can but reach the army,
 The cards are ours!—and yet, I own, I tremble.
 Our names are in the scroll—discovery, death!

Bar. Success, a crown!

De Ber. [apart to BARADAS]. Our future Regent is
 No hero.

Bar. [to DE BERINGHEN]. But his rank makes others
 valiant;

And on his cowardice I mount to power.
 Were Orleans Regent—what were Baradas?
 Oh! by the way—I had forgot, your Highness,
 Friend Huguet whisper'd me, "Beware of Marion:
 I've seen her lurking near the Cardinal's palace."
 Upon that hint, I've found her lodging elsewhere.

Orle. You wrong her, Count. Poor Marion!—she adores
 me.

Bar. [apologetically]. Forgive me, but—

Enter Page.

Page. My Lord, a rude, strange soldier,
 Breathless with haste, demands an audience.

Bar.

So!—

The archers?

Page.

In the ante-room, my Lord,

As you desired.

Bar.

'Tis well—admit the soldier. [Exit Page.
 Huguet!—I bade him seek me here.

Enter HUGUET.

Hug. My Lords,
The deed is done. Now, Count, fulfil your word,
And make me noble.

Bar. Richelieu dead ?—art sure ?
How died he ?

Hug. Strangled in his sleep :—no blood,
No tell-tale violence.

Bar. Strangled ?—monstrous villain !
Reward for murder ! Ho, there ! [*Stamping.*]

Enter Captain with five Archers.

Hug. No, thou durst not !

Bar. Seize on the ruffian—bind him—gag him ! Off
To the Bastile !

Hug. Your word—your plighted faith !

Bar. Insolent liar ! ho, away !

Hug. Nay, Count ;
I have that about me, which——

Bar. Away with him !

[*Exeunt HUGUET and Archers.*]

Now, then, all's safe ; Huguet must die in prison,
So Mauprat :—coax or force the meaner crew
To fly the country. Ha, ha ! thus, your highness,
Great men make use of little men.

De Ber. My Lords,
Since our suspense is ended—you'll excuse me ;
'Tis late—and, *entre nous*, I have not supp'd yet !
I'm one of the new Council now, remember ;
I feel the public stirring here already ;
A very craving monster. *Au revoir !* [*Exit DE BERINGHEN.*]

Orle. No fear, now Richelieu's dead.
Bar. And could he come
To life again, he could not keep life's life—
His power,—nor save De Mauprat from the scaffold,—
Nor Julie from these arms—nor Paris from
The Spaniard—nor your highness from the throne !
All ours ! all ours ! in spite of my Lord Cardinal !

[*Enter Page.*]

Page. A gentleman, my Lord, of better mien
Than he who last——

Bar. Well, he may enter. [*Exit Page.*]

Orle. Who
Can this be ?

Bar. One of the conspirators :
Mauprat himself, perhaps.

Enter FRANÇOIS.

Fran. My Lord——

Bar. Ha, traitor !

In Paris still ?

Fran. The packet—the despatch—
Some knave play'd spy without, and reft it from me,
Ere I could draw my sword.

Bar. Play'd spy without !

Did he wear armour ?

Fran. Ay, from head to heel.

Orle. One of our band. Oh, Heavens !

Bar. Could it be Mauprat ?

Kept guard at the door—knew *nought* of the despatch—
How HE?—and yet, who other ?

Fran. Ha, De Mauprat !

The night was dark—his vizor closed.

Bar. 'Twas he !

How could he guess?—'sdeath ! if he should betray us.
His hate to Richelieu dies with Richelieu—and
He was not great enough for treason. Hence !
Find Mauprat—beg, steal, filch, or force it back,
Or, as I live, the halter——

Fran. By the morrow

I will regain it [*aside*], and redeem my honour !

[*Exit FRANÇOIS.*]

Orle. Oh, we are lost——

Bar. Not so ! But cause on cause
For Mauprat's seizure—silence—death ! Take courage.

Orle. Should it once reach the King, the Cardinal's arm
Could smite us from the grave.

Bar. Sir, think it not !

I hold De Mauprat in my grasp. To-morrow,
And France is ours ! Thou dark and fallen Angel,
Whose name on earth's AMBITION—thou that mak'st
Thy throne on treasons, stratagems, and murder,—
And with thy fierce and blood-red smile canst quench
The guiding stars of solemn empire—hear us
(For we are thine)—and light us to the goal !

ACT IV.

THIRD DAY.

SCENE I.—*The Gardens of the Louvre.*—ORLEANS, BARADAS, DE BERINGHEN, Courtiers, &c.

Orle. How does my brother bear the Cardinal's death ?

Bar. With grief, when thinking of the toils of State ;
With joy, when thinking on the eyes of Julie :—
At times he sighs, " Who now shall govern France ? "
Anon exclaims—" Who now shall baffle Louis ? "

Enter LOUIS and other Courtiers. [They uncover.]

Orle. Now, my liege, now, I can embrace a brother.

Louis. Dear Gaston, yes.—I do believe you *love* me ;—
Richelieu denied it—sever'd us too long.

A great man, Gaston ! Who shall govern France ?

Bar. Yourself, my liege. That swart and potent star
Eclipsed your royal orb. He served the country,
But did he *serve*, or seek to *sway* the King ?

[*Louis.* You're right—he was an able politician—
That's all:—between ourselves, Count, I suspect
The largeness of his learning—specially
In falcons *—a poor huntsman, too !

Bar. Ha—ha !
Your Majesty remembers——

* *Louis XIII.* is said to have possessed some natural talents, and in earlier youth to have exhibited the germs of noble qualities ; but a blight seems to have passed over his maturer life. Personally brave, but morally timid,—always governed, whether by his mother or his minister, and always repining at the yoke. The only affection amounting to a passion that he betrayed, was for the sports of the field ; yet it was his craving weakness (and this throws a kind of false interest over his character) to wish to be loved. He himself loved no one. He suffered the only woman who seems to have been attached to him to wither in a convent ;—he gave up favourite after favourite to exile or the block. When *Richelieu* died, he said coldly, " *Voilà un grand politique mort !*" and when the ill-fated but unprincipled *Cinq Mars*, whom he called "*le cher ami*," was beheaded, he drew out his watch at the fatal hour, and said with a smile, " I think at this moment that *le cher ami* fait une vilaine mine." Nevertheless, his conscience at times (for he was devout and superstitious) made him gentle, and his pride and honour would often, when least expected, rouse him into haughty but brief resistance to the despotism under which he lived.

Louis. Ay, the blunder
Between the *greffier* and the *souillard* when—
[Checks and crosses himself.]

Alas! poor sinners that we are! we laugh
While this great man—a priest, a cardinal,
A faithful servant—out upon us!—

Bar. Sire,
If my brow wear no cloud, 'tis that the Cardinal
No longer shades the King.

Louis [looking up at the skies]. Oh, Baradas!
Am I not to be pitied?—what a day
For—

Bar. Sorrow?—No, Sire!

Louis. Bah! for *hunting*, man,
And Richelieu's dead; 'twould be an indecorum
Till he is buried—[yawns]—life is very tedious.
I made a madrigal on life last week:
You do not sing, * Count?—Pity; you should learn.
Poor Richelieu had no car—yet a great man.
Ah! what a weary weight devolves upon me!
These endless wars—these thankless Parliaments—
The snares in which he tangled States and Kings,
Like the old fisher of the fable, Proteus,
Netting great Neptune's wariest tribes, and changing
Into all shapes when Craft pursued himself:
Oh, a great man!

Bar. Your royal mother said so,
And died in exile.

Louis [sadly]. True: I loved my mother.†

Bar. The Cardinal dies.—Yet day revives the earth;
The rivers run not back. In truth, my liege,
Did your high orb on others shine as him,
Why, things as dull in their own selves as I am

* Louis had some musical taste and accomplishment, wherewith he often communicated to his favourites some of that wearisome *ennui* under which he himself almost unceasingly languished.

† One of Louis's most bitter complaints against Richelieu was the continued banishment of the Queen Mother. It is impossible, however, not to be convinced that the return of that most worthless intrigante was wholly incompatible with the tranquillity of the kingdom. Yet, on the other hand, the poverty and privation which she endured in exile are discreditable to the generosity and the gratitude of Richelieu; she was his first patron, though afterwards his most powerful persecutor.

Would glow as brightly with the borrow'd beam.*

Louis. Ahem !—He was too stern.

Orle. A very Nero.

Bar. His power was like the Capitol of old—
Built on a human skull.

Louis. And, had he lived,
I know another head, my Baradas,
That would have propp'd the pile : I've seen him eye thee
With a most hungry fancy.

Bar. [*anxiously*]. Sire, I knew
You would protect me.

Louis. Did you so ? of course !
And yet he had a way with him—a something
That always——But no matter—he is dead.
And, after all, men call his King “The Just,” †
And so I am. Dear Count, this silliest Julie,
I know not why, she takes my fancy. Many
As fair, and certainly more kind ; but yet
It is so. Count, I am no lustful Tarquin,
And do abhor the bold and frontless vices
Which the Church justly censures ; yet, 'tis sad
On rainy days to drag out weary hours ‡—
Deaf to the music of a woman's voice—
Blind to the sunshine of a woman's eyes.
It is no sin in Kings to seek amusement ;
And that is all I seek. I miss her much—
She has a silver laugh—a rare perfection.

Bar. Richelieu was most disloyal in that marriage.]

* In his Memoirs, Richelieu gives an amusing account of the insolence and arts of Baradas, and observes, with indignant astonishment, that the favourite was never weary of repeating to the King that he (Baradas) would have made just as great a minister as Richelieu. It is on the attachment of Baradas to La Cressias, a maid of honour to the Queen Mother, of whom, according to Baradas, the King was enamoured also, that his love for the Julie de Mortemar of the play has been founded. The secret of Barada's sudden and extraordinary influence with the King seems to rest in the personal adoration which he professed for Louis, with whom he affected all the jealousy of a lover, but whom he flattered with the ardent chivalry of a knight. Even after his disgrace he placed upon his banner, “*Fiat voluntas tua.*”

† Louis was called The Just, but for no other reason than that he was born under the Libra.

‡ Louis XIII. did not resemble either his father or his son in the ardour of his attachments ; if not wholly Platonic, they were wholly unimpassioned : yet no man was more jealous, or more unscrupulously tyrannical when the jealousy was aroused.

Louis [*querulously*]. He knew that Julie pleased me :—
a clear proof
He never loved me!

Bar. Oh, most clear !—But now
No bar between the lady and your will!
This writ makes all secure : a week or two
In the Bastile will sober Mauprat's love,
And leave him eager to dissolve a hymen
That brings him such a home.

Louis.

See to it, Count.

[*Exit BARADAS.*

I'll summon Julie back. A word with you.

[*Takes aside First Courtier, and DE BERINGHEN,
and passes, conversing with them, through the
Gardens.*

Enter FRANÇOIS.

Fran. All search, as yet, in vain for Mauprat !—Not
At home since yesternoon—a soldier told me
He saw him pass this way with hasty strides ;
Should he meet Baradas—they'd rend it from him—
And then—benignant Fortune smiles upon me—
I am thy son !—if thou desert'st me now,
Come, Death, and snatch me from disgrace. But, no,
There's a great Spirit ever in the air
That from prolific and far-spreading wings
Scatters the seeds of honour—yea, the walls
And moats of castled forts—the barren seas—
The cell wherein the pale-eyed student holds
Talk with melodious science—all are sown
With everlasting honours, if our souls
Will toil for fame as boors for bread—

Enter MAUPRAT.

De Mau.

Oh, let me—

Let me but meet him foot to foot—I'll dig
The Judas from his heart ;—albeit the King
Should o'er him cast the purple!

Fran.

Mauprat! hold :—

Where is the——

De Mau. Well! What wouldst thou?

Fran. The despatch !
The packet.—LOOK ON ME—I serve the Cardinal—
You know me.—Did you not keep guard last night
By Marion's house ?

De Mau. I did ;—no matter now !
They told me, he was here !—

Fran. O joy ! quick—quick—
The packet thou didst wrest from me ?

De Mau. The packet ?
What, art thou he I deem'd the Cardinal's spy
(Duke that I was)—and overhearing Marion—

Fran. The same—restore it ! haste !

De Mau. I have it not :
Methought it but reveal'd our scheme to Richelieu,
And, as we mounted, gave it to—

Enter BARADAS.

Stand back !

Now, villain ! now—I have thee !

[*To FRANÇOIS.*] Hence, sir !—*Draw !*

Fran. Art mad ?—the King's at hand ! leave him to
Richelieu !

Speak—the despatch—to whom—

De Mau. [*dashing him aside, and rushing to BARADAS.*]
Thou triple slanderer !

I'll set my heel upon thy crest ! [*A few passes.*]

Fran. Fly—fly !—

The King !

*Enter at one side LOUIS, ORLEANS, DE BERINGHEN, Cour-
tiers, &c. ; at the other, the Guards hastily.*

Louis. Swords drawn—before our very palace !
Have our laws died with Richelieu ?

Bar. Pardon, Sire,—
My crime but self-defence.* [*Aside to King.*] It is De
Mauprat !

* One of Richelieu's severest and least politic laws was that which made duelling a capital crime. Never was the punishment against the offence more relentlessly enforced ; and never were duels so desperate and so numerous. The punishment of death must be evidently ineffectual so long as to refuse a duel is to be dishonoured, and so long as men hold the doctrine, however wrong, that it is better to part with the life that Heaven gave than the honour man makes. In fact, the greater the danger he incurred, the greater was the punctilio of the cavalier of that time in braving it.

Louis. Dare he thus brave us ?

[*BARADAS goes to the Guard, and gives the writ.*

De Mau.

Sire, in the Cardinal's name—

Bar. Seize him—disarm—to the Bastile !

[*DE MAUPRAT seized, struggles with the Guard—FRANÇOIS restlessly endeavouring to pacify and speak to him—when the gates open. Enter RICHELIEU — JOSEPH — followed by Arquebusiers.*

Bar.

The Dead

Return'd to life !

Louis.

What a mock death ! this tops

The Infinite of Insult.

De Mau. [*breaking from the Guards*]. Priest and Hero !—

For you are both—protect the truth !

Rich. [*taking the writ from the Guard*]. What's this ?

De Ber. Fact in Philosophy. Foxes have got

Nine lives, as well as cats !

Bar.

Be firm, my liege.

Louis. I have assumed the sceptre—I will wield it !

Joseph. The tide runs counter—there'll be shipwreck somewhere.

[*BARADAS and ORLEANS keep close to the King, whispering and prompting him when RICHELIEU speaks.*

Rich. High treason—Faviaux ! still that stale pretence !

My liege, bad men (ay, Count, most *knavish* men !)

Abuse your royal goodness. For this soldier,

France hath none braver—and his youth's hot folly,

Misled—(by whom *your Highness* may conjecture !)—

Is long since cancell'd by a loyal manhood.—

I, Sire, have pardon'd him.

Louis.

And we do give

Your pardon to the winds. Sir, do your duty !

Rich. What, Sire ?—you do not know—Oh, pardon me—

You know not yet, that this brave, honest heart,

Stood between mine and murder !—Sire ! for my sake—

For your old servant's sake—undo this wrong.

See, let me read the sentence.

Louis.

At your peril !

This is too much :—Again, sir, do your duty !

Rich. Speak not, but go :—I would not see young Valour
So humbled as grey Service.

De Mau.

Fare you well !

Save Julie, and console her.

Fran. [*aside to MAUPRAT*]. The despatch !

Your fate, foes, life, hang on a word !—to whom ?

De Mau. To Huguet.

Fran.

Hush—keep counsel !—silence—hope !

[*Exeunt MAUPRAT and Guard.*]

Bar. [*aside to FRANÇOIS*]. Has he the packet ?

Fran.

He will not reveal—

[*Aside.*] Work, brain !—beat, heart !—“*There's no such word as fail !*”

[*Exit FRANÇOIS,*

Rich. [*fiercely*]. Room, my Lords, room !—the Minister
of France

Can need no intercession with the King. [*They fall back.*]

Louis. What means this false report of death, Lord
Cardinal ?

Rich. Are you then anger'd, Sire, that I live still ?

Louis. No ; but such artifice—

Rich.

Not mine :—look elsewhere !

Louis—my castle swarm'd with the assassins.

Bar. [*advancing*]. We have punish'd them already.

Huguet now

In the Bastile.—Oh ! my Lord, *we* were prompt

To avenge you—*we* were—

Rich.

WE ?—Ha, ha ! you hear,

My liege ! What page, man, in the last court grammar

Made you a plural ? Count, you have seized the *hireling* :—

Sire, shall I name the *master* ?

Louis.

Tush, my Lord,

The old contrivance :—ever does your wit

Invent assassins,—that ambition may

Slay rivals—

Rich.

Rivals, Sire, in what ?

Service to France ? *I have none !* Lives the man

Whom Europe, paled before your glory, deems

Rival to Armand Richelieu ?

Louis.

What, so haughty !

Remember, he who made, can unmake.

Rich.

Never !

Never ! Your anger can recall your trust,

Annul my office, spoil me of my lands,
 Rifle my coffers,—but my name—my deeds,
 Are royal in a land beyond your sceptre!
 Pass sentence on me, if you will; from Kings,
 Lo! I appeal to time! [Be just, my liege—
 I found your kingdom rent with heresies
 And bristling with rebellion; lawless nobles
 And breadless serfs; England fomenting discord;
 Austria—her clutch on your dominion; Spain
 Forging the prodigal gold of either Ind
 To arm'd thunderbolts. The Arts lay dead,
 Trade rotted in your marts, your Armies mutinous,
 Your Treasury bankrupt. Would you now revoke
 Your trust, so be it! and I leave you, sole
 Supremest Monarch of the mightiest realm,
 From Ganges to the Icebergs:—Look without;
 No foe not humbled!—Look within; the Arts
 Quit for your schools—their old Hesperides
 The golden Italy! while through the veins
 Of your vast empire flows in strengthening tides
 TRADE, the calm health of nations!

Sire, I know
 Your smoother courtiers please you best—nor measure
 Myself with them,—yet sometimes I would doubt
 If Statesmen rock'd and dandled into power
 Could leave such legacies to kings!

[LOUIS appears irresolute.

Bar. [passing him whispers]. But Julie,
 Shall I not summon her to court?]

Louis [motions to BARADAS, and turns haughtily to the
 Cardinal]. Enough!

Your Eminence must excuse a longer audience.
 To your own palace:—For our conference, this
 Nor place—nor season.

Rich. Good my liege, for Justice
 All place a temple, and all season, summer!—
 Do you deny me justice?—Saints of Heaven!
 He turns from me!—Do you deny me justice?
 For fifteen years, while in these hands dwelt Empire,
 The humblest craftsman—the obscurest vassal—
 The very leper shrinking from the sun,
 Though loathed by Charity, might ask for justice!—

Not with the fawning tone and crawling mien
 Of some I see around you—Counts and Princes—
 Kneeling for *favours* ;—but, erect and loud,
 As men who ask man's rights !—my liege, my Louis,
 Do you refuse me justice—audience even—
 In the pale presence of the baffled Murther ? *

Louis. Lord Cardinal—one by one you have sever'd
 from me

The bonds of human love. All near and dear
 Mark'd out for vengeance—exile or the scaffold.
 You find me now amidst my trustiest friends,
 My closest kindred ;—you would tear them from me ;
 They murder *you* forsooth, since *me* they love !
 Eno' of plots and treasons for one reign !
 Home !—Home ! and sleep away these phantoms !

Rich. Sire !
 I—patience, Heaven !—sweet Heaven ! Sire, from the
 foot

Of that Great Throne, these hands have raised aloft
 On an Olympus, looking down on mortals
 And worshipp'd by their awe—before the foot
 Of that high throne,—spurn you the grey-hair'd man,
 Who gave you empire—and now sues for safety ?

Louis. No :—when we see your Eminence in truth
 At the foot of the throne—we'll listen to you.

[*Exit* LOUIS.
 Saved !

Orle.

Bar. For this, deep thanks to Julie and to Mauprat !

Rich. My Lord de Baradas—I pray your pardon—
 You are to be my successor !—your hand, sir !

Bar. [*aside*]. What can this mean ?

Rich. It trembles, see ! it trembles !

The hand that holds the destinies of nations
 Ought to shake less !—poor Baradas—poor France !

Bar. Insolent——

[*Exeunt* BARADAS and ORLEANS.]

* For the haughty and rebuking tone which Richelieu assumed in his expostulations with the King, see his *Memoirs (passim)* in Petitot's collection, vols. 22-30 (*bis*). Montesquieu, in one of his brilliant antitheses, says well of Richelieu, "Il avila le roi, mais il illustra le règne."

SCENE II.

Rich. Joseph—Did you hear the King?

Joseph. I did—there's danger! Had you been less haughty *——

Rich. And suffer'd slaves to chuckle—"See the Cardinal—

How meek his Eminence is to-day"—I tell thee

This is a strife in which the loftiest look

Is the most subtle armour——

Joseph.

But——

Rich.

No time

For ifs and buts. I will accuse these traitors!

François shall witness that De Baradas

Gave him the secret missive for De Bouillon,

And told him life and death were in the scroll.

I will—I will——

Joseph.

Tush! François is your creature;

So they will say, and laugh at you!—*your witness*

Must be that same Despatch.

Rich.

Away to Marion!

Joseph. I have been there—she is seized—removed—imprisoned——

By the Count's orders.

Rich.

Goddess of bright dreams,

My country—shalt thou lose me now, when most

Thou need'st thy worshipper? My native land!

Let me but ward this dagger from thy heart,

And die—but on thy bosom!

Enter JULIE.

Julie.

Heaven! I thank thee!

It cannot be, or this all-powerful man

Would not stand idly thus.

* However, "*orgueilleux*" and "*colère*" in his disputes with Louis, the Cardinal did not always disdain recourse to the arts of the courtier; once, after an angry discussion with the King, in which, as usual, Richelieu got the better, Louis, as they quitted the palace together, said, rudely, "*Sortez le premier; vous êtes bien le roi de France.*" "*Si je passe le premier,*" replied the minister, after a moment's hesitation, and with great adroitness, "*ce ne peut être que comme le plus humble de vos serviteurs;*" and he took a flambeau from one of the pages to light the King as he walked before him — "*en reculant et sans tourner le dos.*"

Rich. What dost thou here ?
Home !

Julie. Home!—is *Adrien* there?—you're dumb—yet strive

For words ; I see them trembling on your lip,
But choked by pity. It *was* truth—all truth !
Seized—the Bastile—and in your presence, too !
Cardinal, where is *Adrien* ?—Think—he saved
Your life :—your name is infamy, if wrong
Should come to his !

Rich. Be soothed, child.

Julie. Child no more ;
I love, and I am woman ! Hope and suffer—
Love, suffering, hope,—what else doth make the strength
And majesty of woman ?—Where is *Adrien* ?

Rich. [*to JOSEPH*]. Your youth was never young—you
never loved :—

Speak to her—

Joseph. Nay, take heed—the King's command,
'Tis true—I mean—the—

Julie [*to RICHELIEU*]. Let thine eyes meet mine ;
Answer me but one word—I am a wife—
I ask thee for my *home*—my FATE—my ALL !
Where is my husband ?

Rich. You are Richelien's ward,
A soldier's bride : they who insist on truth
Must out-face fear ;—you ask me for your husband ?
There—where the clouds of Heaven look darkest, o'er
The domes of the Bastile !

Julie. I thank you, father ;
You see I do not shudder. Heaven forgive you
The sin of this desertion !

Rich. [*detaining her*]. Whither wouldst thou ?

Julie. Stay me not. Fie ! I should be there already.
I am thy ward, and haply he may think
'Thou'st taught me also to forsake the wretched !

Rich. I've fill'd those cells—with many—traitors all.
Had they wives too ?—Thy memories, Power, are solemn !
Poor sufferer !—think'st thou that yon gates of woe
Unbar to love ? Alas ! if love once enter,
'Tis for the last farewell ; between those walls

And the mute grave *—the blessed household sounds
Only heard once—while hungering at the door,
The headsman whets the axe.

Julie. O, mercy ! mercy !
Save him, restore him, father ! Art thou not
The Cardinal-King ?—the Lord of life and death—
Beneath whose light, as deeps beneath the moon,
The solemn tides of Empire ebb and flow ?
Art thou not Richelieu ?

Rich. Yesterday I was !—
To-day, a very weak old man !—To-morrow,
I know not what !

Julie. Do you conceive his meaning ?
Alas ! I cannot. But, methinks, my senses
Are duller than they were !

Joseph. The King is chafed
Against his servant. Lady, while we speak,
The lackey of the ante-room is not
More powerless than the Minister of France.

[*Rich.* And yet the air is still ; Heaven wears no cloud ;
From Nature's silent orbit starts no portent
To warn the unconscious world ; albeit this night
May with a morrow teem which, in my fall,
Would carry earthquake to remotest lands,
And change the Christian globe. What wouldst thou,
woman ?

Thy fate and his, with mine, for good or ill,
Are woven threads. In my vast sum of life
Millions such units merge.]

Enter First Courtier.

First Cour. Madame de Mauprat !
Pardon, your Eminence—even now I seek
This lady's home—commanded by the King
To pray her presence.

Julie [*clinging to RICHELIEU*]. Think of my dead
father !—

Think, how, an infant, clinging to your knees,
And looking to your eyes, the wrinkled care
Fled from your brow before the smile of childhood,

* "Selon l'usage de Louis XIII., faire arrêter quelqu'un pour crime d'état, et le faire mourir, l'était à peu près la même chose."—*Le Clerc.*

Fresh from the dews of Heaven! Think of this,
And take me to your breast.

Rich. To those who sent you!—
And say you found the virtue they would slay
Here—couch'd upon this heart, as at an altar,
And shelter'd by the wings of sacred Rome!
Begone!

First Cour. My Lord, I am your friend and servant—
Misjudge me not; but never yet was Louis
So roused against you:—shall I take this answer?—
It were to be your foe.

Rich. All time my foe,
If I, a Priest, could cast this holy Sorrow
Forth from her last asylum!

First Cour. He is lost! [*Exit First Courtier.*]

Rich. God help thee, child!—she hears not! Look
upon her!

The storm, that rends the oak, uproots the flower.
Her father loved me so! and in that age
When friends are brothers! She has been to me
Soother, nurse, plaything, daughter. Are these tears? *
Oh! shame, shame!—dotage!

Joseph. Tears are not for eyes
That rather need the lightning, which can pierce
Through barrèd gates and triple walls, to smite
Crime, where it cowers in secret!—The Despatch!
Set every spy to work;—the morrow's sun
Must see that written treason in your hands,
Or rise upon your ruin.

Rich. Ay—and close
Upon my corpse!—I am not made to live—
Friends, glory, France, all reft from me;—my star
Like some vain holiday mimicry of fire,
Piercing imperial Heaven, and falling down
Rayless and blacken'd, to the dust—a thing

* Like Cromwell and Rienzi, Richelieu appears to have been easily moved to tears. The Queen-Mother, who put the hardest interpretation on that humane weakness, which is natural with very excitable temperaments, said that "il pleurait quand il voulait." I may add, to those who may be inclined to imagine that Richelieu appears in parts of this scene too dejected for consistency with so imperious a character, that it is recorded of him that "quand ses affaires ne réussissoient pas, il se trouvoit abattu et epouvanté, et quand il obtenoit ce qu'il souhaitoit, il étoit fier et insultant."

For all men's feet to trample! Yea!—to-morrow
Triumph or death! Look up, child!—Lead us, Joseph.

[*As they are going out, enter BARADAS and DE
BERINGHEN.*]

Bar. My Lord, the King cannot believe your Eminence
So far forgets your duty, and his greatness,
As to resist his mandate! Pray you, Madam,
Obey the King—no cause for fear!

Julie.

My father!

Rich. She shall not stir!

Bar. You are not of her kindred—
An orphan—

Rich. And her country is her mother!

Bar. The country is the King!

Rich.

Ay, is it so?—

Then wakes the power which in the age of iron
Burst forth to curb the great, and raise the low.
Mark, where she stands!—around her form I draw
The awful circle of our solemn church!
Set but a foot within that holy ground,
And on thy head—yea, though it wore a crown—
I launch the curse of Rome!

Bar.

I dare not brave you!

I do but speak the orders of my King,
The church, your rank, power, very word, my Lord,
Suffice you for resistance:—blame yourself,
If it should cost you power!

Rich.

That *my* stake.—Ah!

Dark gamester! *what is thine?* Look to it well!—
Lose not a trick.—By this same hour to-morrow
Thou shalt have France, or I thy head!

Bar. [*aside to DE BERINGHEN*]. He cannot
Have the Despatch?

De Ber.

No: were it so, your stake

Were lost already.

Joseph [*aside*].

Patience is your game:

Reflect, you have not the Despatch!

Rich.

O! monk!

Leave patience to the saints—for *I* am human!
Did not thy father die for France, poor orphan?
And now they say thou hast *no* father!—Fie!
Art thou not pure and good?—if so, thou art

A part of that—the Beautiful, the Sacred—
Which, in all climes, men that have hearts adore,
By the great title of their mother country !

Bar. [*aside*]. He wanders !

Rich. So cling close unto my breast,
Here where thou droop'st lies France. I am very
feeble—

Of little use it seems to either now.

Well, well—we will go home.

Bar. In sooth, my Lord,
You do need rest—the burthens of the State
O'ertask your health !

Rich. [*to JOSEPH*]. I'm patient, see !

Bar. [*aside*]. His mind
And life are breaking fast !

Rich. [*overhearing him.*] Irreverent ribald !
If so, beware the falling ruins ! Hark !
I tell thee, scorner of these whitening hairs,
When this snow melteth there shall come a flood !
Avant ! my name is Richelieu—I defy thee !
Walk blindfold on ; behind thee stalks the headsman.
Ha ! ha !—how pale he is ! Heaven save my country !

[*Falls back in JOSEPH's arms.*]

[*BARADAS exit, followed by DE BEEINGHEN, betray-
ing his exultation by his gestures.*]

ACT V.

FOURTH DAY.

SCENE I.—*The Bastille—a Corridor ; in the back-ground the door of one of the condemned cells.*

Enter JOSEPH and Gaoler.

Gaoler. Stay, father ; I will call the Governor.

[Exit Gaoler.]

Joseph. He has it, then—this Huguet ;—so we learn
From François ;—Humph ! Now if I can but gain
One moment's access, all is ours ! The Cardinal
Trembles 'tween life and death. His life is power ;
Smite one—slay both ! No Æsculapian drugs,
By learnèd quacks baptized with Latin jargon,
E'er bore the healing which that scrap of parchment
Will medicine to Ambition's flagging heart.
France shall be saved—and Joseph be a bishop.

Enter Governor and GAOLER.

Gov. Father, you wish to see the prisoners Huguet
And the young knight De Mauprat ?

Joseph. So my office,
And the Lord Cardinal's order, warrant, son !

Gov. Father, it cannot be : Count Baradas
Has summon'd to the Louvre Sieur de Mauprat.

Joseph. Well, well ! But Huguet——

Gov. Dies at noon.

Joseph. At noon !

No moment to delay the pious rites
Which fit the soul for death. Quick—quick—admit me !

Gov. You cannot enter, monk ! Such are my orders !

Joseph. Orders, vain man !—the Cardinal still is
minister.

His orders crush all others !

Gov. *[lifting his hat].* Save his king's !

See, monk, the royal sign and seal affix'd
To the Count's mandate. None may have access

To either prisoner, Huguet or De Mauprat,
Not even a priest, without the special passport
Of Count de Baradas. I'll hear no more !

Joseph. Just Heaven ! and are we baffled thus ? Despair !
Think on the Cardinal's power—beware his anger.

Gov. I'll not be menaced, Priest ! Besides, the Cardinal
Is dying and disgraced—all Paris knows it.

You hear the prisoner's knell ! [*Bell tolls.*]

Joseph. I do beseech you—
The Cardinal is *not* dying. But one moment,

And—hist !—five thousand pistoles !—

Gov. How ! a bribe !—
And to a soldier, grey with years of honour !

Begone !—

Joseph. Ten thousand—twenty !—

Gov. Gaoler ; put

This monk without our walls.

Joseph. By those grey hairs—
Yea, by this badge [*touching the cross of St. Louis worn by*
the Governor]—The guerdon of your valour—

By all your toils—hard days and sleepless nights—

Borne in your country's service, noble son—

Let me but see the prisoner !—

Gov. No !

Joseph. He hath

Secrets of state—papers in which——

Gov. [*interrupting*]. I know—

Such was his message to Count Baradas :

Doubtless the Count will see to it !

Joseph. The Count !

Then not a hope !—You shall——

Gov. Betray my trust !

Never—not one word more. You heard me, gaoler !

Joseph. What can be done ?—Distraction ! Richelieu yet
Must—what ?—I know not ! Thought, nerve, strength,
forsake me.

Dare you refuse the Church her holiest rights ?

Gov. I refuse nothing—I obey my orders.

Joseph. And sell your country to her parricides !

Oh, tremble yet !—Richelieu——

Gov. Begone !

Joseph. Undone ! [*Exit JOSEPH.*]

Gov. A most audacious shaveling—interdicted
Above all others by the Count.

Gaoler. I hope, sir,
I shall not lose my perquisites. The *Sieur*
De Mauprat will not be reprieved?

Gov. Oh, fear not:
The Count's commands by him who came from *Mauprat*
Are to prepare headsman and axe by noon;
The Count will give you perquisites enough—
Two deaths in one day!

Gaoler. Sir, may Heaven reward him!
Oh, by the way, that troublesome young fellow,
Who calls himself the prisoner *Huguet's* son
Is here again—implores, weeps, raves to see him.

Gov. Poor youth, I pity him!

Enter DE BERINGHEN, followed by FRANÇOIS.

De Ber. [to *FRANÇOIS*]. Now, prithee, friend,
Let go my cloak; you really discompose me.

Fran. No, they will drive me hence: my father! Oh!
Let me but see him once—but once—one moment!

De Ber. [to Governor]. Your servant, *Messire*; this poor
rascal, *Huguet*,
Has sent to see the Count *de Baradas*
Upon state secrets, that afflict his conscience.
The Count can't leave his Majesty an instant:
I am his proxy.

Gov. The Count's word is law!
Again, young scapegrace! How com'st thou admitted?

De Ber. Oh! a most filial fellow: *Huguet's* son!
I found him whimpering in the court below.
I pray his leave to say good-bye to father,
Before that very long, unpleasant journey,
Father's about to take. Let him wait here
Till I return.

Fran. No; take me with you.

De Ber. Nay;
After me, friend—the Public first!

Gov. The Count's
Commands are strict. No one must visit *Huguet*
Without his passport.

De Ber. Here it is! Pshaw! nonsense!

I'll be your surety. See, my Cerberus,
He is no Hercules !

Gov. Well, you're responsible.
Stand there, friend. If, when you come out, my Lord,
The youth slip in, 'tis *your* fault.

De Ber. So it is !

[*Exit through the door of the cell, followed by the Gaoler.*]

Gov. Be calm, my lad. Don't fret so. I had once
A father, too ! I'll not be hard upon you,
And so, stand close. I must not *see* you enter :
You understand ! Between this innocent youth
And that intriguing monk there is, in truth,
A wide distinction.

Re-enter Gaoler.

Come, we'll go our rounds ;
I'll give you just one quarter of an hour ;
And if my Lord leave first, make my excuse.
Yet stay, the gallery's long and dark : no sentry
Until he reach the grate below. He'd best
Wait till I come. If he should lose the way,
We may not be in call.

Fran. I'll tell him, sir.

[*Exeunt Governor and Gaoler.*]

He's a wise son that knoweth his own father.
I've forged a precious one ! So far, so well !
Alas ! what then ? this wretch hath sent to Baradas—
Will sell the scroll to ransom life. Oh, Heaven !

On what a thread hangs hope ! [Listens at the door.

Loud words—a cry !

[Looks through the keyhole.

They struggle ! Ho !—the packet !!!

[Tries to open the door.

Lost ! He has it—

The courtier hast it—Huguet, spite his chains,
Grapples !—well done ! Now—now ! [Draws back.

The gallery's long—

And this is left us !

[Drawing his dagger, and standing behind the door.

Re-enter DE BERINGHEN with the packet.

Victory !

Yield it—or die—
De Ber. Off! ho!—there!—
Fran. [*grappling with him*]. Death or honour!
 [Exit struggling.]

SCENE II.

The King's closet at the Louvre. A suite of rooms in perspective at one side.

BARADAS and ORLEANS.

Bar. All smiles! the Cardinal's swoon of yesterday
 Heralds his death to-day. Could he survive,
 It would not be as minister—so great
 The King's resentment at the priest's defiance!
All smiles!—And yet, should this accursed De Mauprat
 Have given our packet to another—'Sdeath!
 I dare not think of it!

Orle. You've sent to search him?

Bar. Sent, sir, to search?—that hireling hands may find
 Upon him, naked, with its broken seal,
 That scroll, whose every word is death! No—No—
 These hands alone must clutch that awful secret.
 I dare not leave the palace, night nor day,
 While Richelieu lives—his minions—creatures—spies—
 Not one must reach the King!

Orle. What hast thou done?

Bar. Summon'd De Mauprat hither.

Orle. Could this Huguet,

Who pray'd thy presence with so fierce a fervour,
 Have thieved the scroll?

Bar. Huguet was housed with us,
 The very moment we dismiss'd the courier.
 It cannot be! a stale trick for reprieve.
 But, to make sure, I've sent our trustiest friend
 To see and sift him.—Hist!—here comes the King—
 How fare you, Sire?

Enter LOUIS.

Louis.

In the same mind. I have

Decided!—Yes, he would forbid your presence,
 My brother—yours, my friend,—then Julie, too!
 Thwarts—braves—defies—[*suddenly turning to BARADAS*]

We make you minister.

Gaston, for you—the bâton of our armies.

You love me, do you not?

Orle.

Oh, love you, Sire?

[*Aside.*] Never so much as now.

Bar.

May I deserve

Your trust [*aside*] until you sign your abdication!

My liege, but one way left to daunt De Mauprat,

And Julie to divorce.—We must prepare

The death-writ; what, though sign'd and seal'd? we can

Withhold the enforcement.

Louis.

Ah, you may prepare it;

We need not urge it to effect.

Bar.

Exactly!

No haste, my liege. [*Looking at his watch and aside.*] He
 may live one hour longer.

Enter Courtier.

Cour. The Lady Julie, Sire, implores an audience.

Louis. Aha! repentant of her folly!—Well,

Admit her.

Bar.

Sire, she comes for Mauprat's pardon,

And the conditions——

Louis.

You are minister——

We leave to you our answer.

[*As JULIE enters, the Captain of the Archers by
 another door, and whispers BARADAS.*]

Capt.

The Chevalier

De Mauprat waits below.

Bar. [*aside*].

Now the despatch!

[*Exit with Officer.*]

Enter JULIE.

Julie. My liege, you sent for me. I come where Grief
 Should come when guiltless, while the name of King
 Is holy on the earth! Here, at the feet
 Of Power, I kneel for mercy.

Louis.

Mercy, Julie,

Is an affair of state. The Cardinal should
In this be your interpreter.

Julie.

Alas !

I know not if that mighty spirit now
Stoop to the things of earth. Nay, while I speak,
Perchance he hears the orphan by the throne
Where kings themselves need pardon ; O my liege,
Be father to the fatherless ; in you
Dwells my last hope !

Enter BARADAS.

Bar. [aside]. He has not the despatch ;
Smiled, while we search'd, and braves me.--Oh !

Louis [gently].

What wouldst thou ?

Julie. A single life.—You reign o'er millions.—What
Is *one man's* life to you ?—and yet to *me*
'Tis France—'tis earth—'tis everything !—a life—
A human life—my husband's.

Louis [aside].

Speak to her,

I am not marble,—give her hope—or——

Bar.

Madam,

Vex not your King, whose heart, too soft for justice,
Leaves to his ministers that solemn charge.

[*LOUIS walks up the stage.*]

Julie. You *were* his friend.

Bar.

I *was* before I loved thee.

Julie. Loved me !

Bar.

Hush, Julie : couldst thou misinterpret
My acts, thoughts, motives, nay, my very words,
Here—in this palace ?

Julie.

Now I know I'm mad ;

Even that memory fail'd me.

Bar.

I am young,

Well-born and brave as Mauprat !—for thy sake
I peril what he has not—fortune—power ;
All to great souls most dazzling. I alone
Can save thee from yon tyrant, now my puppet !
Be mine ; annul the mockery of this marriage,
And on the day I clasp thee to my breast
De Mauprat shall be free.

Julie.

Thou durst not speak

Thus in *his ear* [*pointing to Louis*]. Thou double traitor !
—tremble !

I will unmask thee.

Bar.

I will say thou ravest.

And see this scroll ! its letters shall be blood !

Go to the King, count with me word for word ;

And while you pray the life—I write the sentence !

Julie. Stay, stay [*rushing to the King*]. You have a
kind and princely heart,

Tho' sometimes it is silent : you were born

To *power*—it has not flush'd you into madness,

As it doth meaner men. Banish my husband—

Dissolve our marriage—cast me to that grave

Of human ties, where hearts congeal to ice,

In the dark convent's everlasting winter—

(Surely eno' for justice—hate—revenge)—

But spare this life, thus lonely, scath'd, and bloomless ;

And when thou stand'st for judgment on thine own,

The deed shall shine beside thee as an angel.

Louis [*much affected*]. Go, go, to Baradas : annul thy
marriage,

And——

Julie [*anxiously, and watching his countenance*]. Be his
bride !

Louis. A form, a mere decorum ;

Thou know'st I love thee.

Julie.

O thou sea of shame,

And not one star !

[*The King goes up the stage, and passes through
the suite of rooms at the side, in evident
emotion.*]

Bar.

Well, thy election, Julie ;

This hand—his grave !

Julie.

His grave ! and I——

Bar.

Can save him.—

Swear to be mine.

Julie.

That were a bitterer death !

Avaunt, thou tempter ! I did ask his life

A boon, and not the barter of dishonour.

The heart can break, and scorn you : wreak your malice ;

Adrien and I will leave you this sad earth,

And pass together hand in hand to Heaven !

Bar. You have decided.

[*Withdraws to the side scene for a moment, and returns.*]

Listen to me, Lady ;

I am no base intriguer. I adored thee
From the first glance of those inspiring eyes ;
With thee entwined ambition, hope, the future.
I will not lose thee ! I can place thee nearest—
Ay, to the throne—nay, on the throne, perchance ;
My star is at its zenith. Look upon me ;
Hast thou decided ?

Julie. No, no ; you can see
How weak I am : be human, sir—one moment.

Bar. [*stamping his foot, DE MAUPRAT appears at the side of the stage guarded*]. Behold thy husband !—Shall
he pass to death,
And know thou couldst have saved him ?

Julie. Adrien, speak !
But say you wish to *live* !—if not, your wife,
Your slave,—do with me as you will.

De Mau. Once more !—
Why this is mercy, Count ! Oh, think, my Julie,
Life, at the best, is short,—but love immortal !

Bar. [*taking JULIE's hand*]. Ah, loveliest—

Julie. Go, that touch has made me iron.
We have decided—death !

Bar. [*to DE MAUPRAT*]. Now say to whom
Thou gavest the packet, and thou yet shalt live.

De Mau. I'll tell thee nothing !

Bar. Hark,—the rack !

De Mau. Thy penance
For ever, wretch !—What rack is like the conscience ?

Julie. I shall be with thee soon.

Bar. [*giving the writ to the Officer*]. Hence, to the
headsman !

[*The doors are thrown open. The Huissier announces "His Eminence the Cardinal Duke de Richelieu."*]

[*Enter RICHELIEU, attended by Gentlemen, Pages, &c., pale, feeble, and leaning on JOSEPH, followed by three Secretaries of State, attended by Sub-Secretaries with papers, &c.*]

Julie [*rushing to RICHELIEU*]. You live—you live—and
Adrien shall not die!

Rich. Not if an old man's prayers, himself near death,
Can aught avail thee, daughter! Count, you now
Hold what I held on earth:—one boon, my Lord,
This soldier's life.

Bar. The stake,—my head!—you said it.
I cannot lose one trick.—Remove your prisoner.

Julie. No!—No!—

Enter LOUIS from the rooms beyond.

Rich. [*to Officer*]. Stay, Sir, one moment. My good liege,
Your worn-out servant, willing, Sire, to spare you
Some pain of conscience, would forestall your wishes.
I do resign my office.

De Mau.

You!

Julie.

All's over!

Rich. My end draws near. These sad ones, Sire, I love
them.

I do not ask his life; but suffer justice
To halt, until I can dismiss his soul,
Charged with an old man's blessing.

Louis.

Surely!

Bar.

Sire——

Louis. Silence—small favour to a dying servant.

Rich. You would consign your armies to the bâton
Of your most honoured brother. Sire, so be it!
Your minister, the Count de Baradas;
A most sagacious choice!—Your Secretaries
Of State attend me, Sire, to render up
The ledgers of a realm. I do beseech you,
Suffer these noble gentlemen to learn
The nature of the glorious task that waits them,
Here, in my presence.

Louis.

You say well, my Lord.

[*To Secretaries, as he seats himself.*]

Approach, Sirs.

Rich.

I—I—faint!—air—air!

[*JOSEPH and a Gentleman assist him to a sofa,
placed beneath a window.*]

I thank you—

Draw near, my children.

Bar. He's too weak to question.
Nay, scarce to speak ; all's safe.

SCENE III.

Manent RICHELIEU, MAUPRAT, and JULIE, the last kneeling beside the Cardinal ; the Officer of the Guard behind MAUPRAT. JOSEPH near RICHELIEU, watching the King. LOUIS. BARADAS at the back of the King's chair, anxious and disturbed. ORLEANS at a greater distance, careless and triumphant. The Secretaries. As each Secretary advances in his turn, he takes the portfolios from the Sub-Secretaries.

First Sec. The affairs of Portugal,
Most urgent, Sire : One short month since the Duke
Braganza was a rebel.

Louis. And is still !

First Sec. No, Sire, *he has succeeded !* He is now
Crown'd King of Portugal—craves instant succour
Against the arms of Spain.

Louis. We will not grant it
Against his lawful king. Eh, Count ?

Bar. No, Sire.

First Sec. But Spain's your deadliest foe : whatever
Can weaken Spain must strengthen France. The Cardinal
Would send the succours :—[solemnly]—balance, Sire, of
Europe !

Louis. The Cardinal !—balance !—We'll consider.—Eh,
Count ?

Bar. Yes, Sire ;—fall back.

First Sec.

But——

Bar.

Oh ! fall back, Sir.

Joseph.

Humph !

Second Sec. The affairs of England, Sire, most urgent :
Charles

The First has lost a battle that decides
One half his realm,—craves moneys, Sire, and succour.

Louis. He shall have both.—Eh, Baradas ?

Bar.

Yes, Sire.

(Oh that despatch !—my veins are fire !)

Rich. [feebly, but with great distinctness]. My liege—
Forgive me—Charles's cause is lost ! A man,

Named Cromwell, risen,—a great man!—your succour
Would fail—your loans be squander'd!—Pause—reflect.*

Louis. Reflect.—Eh, Baradas?

Bar. Reflect, Sire.

Joseph. Humph!

Louis [aside]. I half repent!—No successor to Richelieu!—

Round me thrones totter!—dynasties dissolve!—

The soil he guards alone escapes the earthquake!

Joseph. Our star not yet eclipsed!—you mark the King?
Oh! had we the despatch!

Rich. Ah! Joseph!—Child—
Would I could help thee!

Enter Gentleman, whispers JOSEPH, who exit hastily.

Bar. [to Secretary]. Sir, fall back.

Second Sec.

But——

Bar.

Pshaw, Sir!

Third Sec. [mysteriously]. The secret correspondence,
Sire, most urgent,—

Accounts of spies—deserters—heretics—

Assassins—poisoners—schemes against yourself!——

Louis. Myself!—most urgent!—[*looking on the documents.*]

Re-enter JOSEPH with FRANÇOIS, whose pourpoint is streaked with blood. FRANÇOIS passes behind the Cardinal's Attendants, and, sheltered by them from the sight of BARADAS, &c, falls at RICHELIEU'S feet.

Fran.

O! my Lord!

Rich.

Thou art bleeding!

Fran. A scratch—I have not fail'd——

[*Gives the packet.*]

Rich.

Hush!—

[*Looking at the contents.*]

Third Sec. [to King].

Sire, the Spaniards—

Have reinforced their army on the frontiers.

The Duc de Bouillon——

Rich.

Hold!—In this department—

* See in "Cinq Mars," Vol. V., the striking and brilliant chapter from which the interlude of the Secretaries is borrowed.

A paper—here, Sire,—read yourself—then take
The Count's advice in't.

Enter DE BERINGHEN hastily, and draws aside BARADAS.

[RICHELIEU to Secretary, giving an open parchment.

Bar. *[bursting from DE BERINGHEN]*. What! and reft it
from thee!

Ha!—hold!

Joseph. Fall back, son, it is your turn now!

Bar. Death!—the despatch!

Louis *[reading]*. To Bouillon—and sign'd Orleans!—

Baradas, too!—league with our foes of Spain!—

Lead our Italian armies—what! to Paris!—

Capture the King—my health requires repose—

Make me subscribe my proper abdication—

Orleans, my brother, Regent!—Saints of Heaven!

These are the men I loved!

[BARADAS draws,—attempts to rush out,—is arrested.—ORLEANS, endeavouring to escape more quickly, meets JOSEPH's eye and stops short.
RICHELIEU falls back.

Joseph. See to the Cardinal!

Bar. He's dying! and I yet shall dupe the King!

Louis *[rushing to RICHELIEU]*. Richelieu!—Lord Cardinal!—'tis I resign!—

Reign thou!

Joseph. Alas! too late!—he faints!

Louis. Reign, Richelieu!

Rich. *[feebly]*. With absolute power?—

Louis. Most absolute!—Oh! live!

If not for me—for France!

Rich. FRANCE!

Louis. Oh! this treason!—

The army—Orleans—Bouillon—Heavens!—the Spaniard!—

Where will they be next week?—

Rich. *[starting up]*. There,—at my feet!

[To First and Second Secretary.

Ere the clock strike!—the Envoys have their answer!

[To Third Secretary, with a ring.

This to De Chavigny—he knows the rest—

No need of parchment here—he must not halt

For sleep—for food.—In *my* name,—*MINE*!—he will
 Arrest the Duc de Bouillon at the head
 Of his army!—Ho! there, Count de Baradas,
 Thou hast lost the stake!—Away with him! *

*[As the Guards open the folding-doors, a view of
 the ante-room beyond, lined with Courtiers.
 BARADAS passes through the line.]*

Ha!—ha!—

*[Snatching DE MAUPRAT'S death-warrant from the
 Officer.]*

See here De Mauprat's death-writ, Julie!—
 Parchment for battledores!—Embrace your husband!—
 At last the old man blesses you!

Julie.

O joy!

You are saved; you live—I hold you in these arms.

Mau. Never to part—

Julie.

No—never, Adrien—never!

Louis [*peevishly*]. One moment makes a startling cure,
 Lord Cardinal.†

Rich. Ay, Sire, for in one moment there did pass
 Into this wither'd frame the might of France!—
 My own dear France—I have thee yet—I have saved thee!
 I clasp thee still!—it was thy voice that call'd me
 Back from the tomb!—What mistress like our country?

Louis. For Mauprat's pardon—well! But Julie,—
 Richelieu,

Leave me one thing to love!—

Rich.

A subject's luxury!

Yet, if you must love something, Sire,—*love me!*

Louis [*smiling in spite of himself*]. Fair proxy for a
 young fresh Demoiselle!

* The passion of the drama requires this catastrophe for Baradas. He however survived his disgrace, though stripped of all his rapidly-acquired fortunes; and the daring that belonged to his character won him distinction in foreign service. He returned to France after Richelieu's death, but never regained the same court influence. He had taken the vows of a Knight of Malta, and Louis made him a Prior.

† The sudden resuscitation of Richelieu (not to strain too much on the real passion which supports him in this scene) is in conformance with the more dissimulating part of his character. The extraordinary mobility of his countenance (latterly so deathlike, save when the mind spoke in the features) always lent itself to stage effect of this nature. The queen-mother said of him, that she had seen him one moment so feeble, cast down, and "semi-mort," that he seemed on the point of giving up the ghost—and the next moment he would start up full of animation, energy, and life.

Rich. Your heart speaks for my clients :—Kneel, my children,
And thank your King,—

Julie. Ah, tears like these, my liege,
Are dews that mount to Heaven.

Louis. Rise—rise—be happy.

[*RICHELIEU beckons to DE BERINGHEN.*]

De Ber. [*falteringly*]. My lord—you are—most—happily
—recover'd.

Rich. But you are pale, dear Beringhen :—this air
Suits not your delicate frame—I long have thought so :—
Sleep not another night in Paris :—Go,—
Or else your precious life may be in danger.
Leave France, dear Beringhen !

De Ber. I shall have time,
More than I ask'd for—to discuss the pâté.

[*Exit DE BERINGHEN.*]

Rich. [*to ORLEANS*]. For you, repentance—absence—and
confession !

[*To FRANÇOIS.*]

Never say *fail* again.—Brave boy !

[*To JOSEPH.*]

He'll be—

A Bishop first.

Joseph. Ah, Cardinal—

Rich. Ah, Joseph !

[*To LOUIS—as DE MAUPRAT and JULIE converse
[apart.*]

See, my liege—see thro' plots and counterplots—
Thro' gain and loss—thro' glory and disgrace—
Along the plains, where passionate Discord rears
Eternal Babel—still the holy stream
Of human happiness glides on !

Louis. And must we
Thank for *that* also—our prime Minister ?

Rich. No—let us own it :—there is ONE above
Sways the harmonious mystery of the world,
Ev'n better than prime ministers ;—

Alas !

Our glories float between the earth and heaven
Like clouds which seem pavilions of the sun,
And are the playthings of the casual wind ;
Still, like the cloud which drops on unseen crags.
The dews the wild flower feeds on, our ambition

May from its airy height drop gladness down
On unsuspected virtue;—and the flower
May bless the cloud when it hath pass'd away! *

* The image and the sentiment in the concluding lines are borrowed from a passage in one of the writings attributed to the Cardinal.

NOT SO BAD AS WE SEEM;

OR,

MANY SIDES TO A CHARACTER.



Dedication.

TO

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G.

MY LORD DUKE,

This Play is respectfully dedicated to your Grace in token of the earnest gratitude, both of Author and Performers, for the genial and noble sympathy which has befriended their exertions in the cause of their brotherhood.

The debt that we can but feebly acknowledge, may those who come after us seek to repay; and may each loftier Cultivator of Art and Letters, whom the Institution established under your auspices may shelter from care and penury, see on its corner-stone your princely name,—and perpetuate to distant times the affectionate homage it commands from ourselves.

It is this hope that can alone render worthy the tribute which, in my own name as Author, and in the names of my companions the Performers, of the Play first represented at Devonshire House, I now offer to your Grace, with every sentiment that can deepen and endear the respect and admiration

With which I have the honour to be,

My Lord Duke,

Your Grace's most obedient and faithful Servant,

E. BULWER LYTTON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ORIGINAL CAST.

THE DUKE OF MIDDLESEX,	<i>Peers attached to the son of James II., commonly called the First Pretender</i>	MR. FRANK STONE.
THE EARL OF LOFTUS,		MR. DUDLEY COSTELLO.
LORD WILMOT, a young man at the head of the Mode more than a century ago, son to Lord Loftus		MR. CHARLES DICKENS.
MR. SHADOWLY SOFTHEAD, a young gentleman from the city, friend and double to Lord Wilmot		MR. DOUGLAS JERROLD.
HARDMAN, a rising Member of Parliament, and adherent to Sir Robert Walpole		MR. JOHN FORSTER.
SIR GEOFFREY THORNSIDE, a gentleman of good family and estate		MR. MARK LEMON.
MR. GOODENOUGH EASY, in business, highly respectable, and a friend of Sir Geoffrey		MR. E. W. TOPHAM.
LORD LE TRIMMER	<i>Frequenters of Will's Coffee House</i>	MR. PETER CUNNINGHAM.
SIR THOMAS TIMID		MR. WESTLAND MARSTON.
COLONEL FLINT, a Fire-eater		MR. R. H. HORNE.
MR. JACOB TONSON, a Bookseller		MR. CHARLES KNIGHT.
SMART, Valet to Lord Wilmot		MR. WILKIE COLLINS.
HODGE, Servant to Sir Geoffrey Thorne		MR. JOHN TENNIEL.
PADDY O'SULLIVAN, Mr. Fallen's Landlord		MR. ROBERT BELL.
MR. DAVID FALLEN, Grub Street Author and Pamphleteer		MR. AUGUSTUS EGG, A.R.A.

Coffee-House Loungers, Drawers, Newsmen, Watchmen, &c. &c.

LUCY, Daughter to Sir Geoffrey Thorne	MRS. COMPTON.
BARBARA, daughter to Mr. Easy	MISS ELLEN CHAPLIN.
THE SILENT LADY OF DEADMAN'S LANE (LADY THORNSIDE)	—

Date of Play—The Reign of George I. *Scene*—London.

Time supposed to be occupied, from the noon of the first day to the afternoon of the second.

NOT SO BAD AS WE SEEM;

OR,

MANY SIDES TO A CHARACTER.

ACT I.—SCENE I.

LORD WILMOT'S *Apartment in St. James's.*

Smart [*showing in a Masked Lady*]. My Lord is dressing. As you say, madam, it is late. But though he never wants sleep more than once a week, yet when he does sleep, I am proud to say he sleeps better than any man in the three kingdoms.

Lady. I have heard much of Lord Wilmot's eccentricities—but also of his generosity and honour.

Smart. Yes, madam, nobody like him for speaking ill of himself and doing good to another.

Enter WILMOT.

Wil. "And sleepless lovers just at twelve awake." Any duels to-day, Smart? No—I see something more dangerous—a woman. [*To SMART.*] Vanish. [*Placing a chair for Lady.*] Madam, have I the honour to know you? Condescend to remove your vizard. [*Lady lifts her mask.*] Very fine woman, still—decidedly dangerous. Madam, allow me one precautionary observation—My affections are engaged.

Lady. So I conjectured; for I have noticed you from the window of my house, walking in the garden of Sir Geoffrey Thornsides with his fair daughter: and she seems worthy to fix the affections of the most fickle.

Wil. My dear madam, do you know Sir Geoffrey? Bind me to you for life, and say a kind word to him in my favour.

Lady. Can you need it?—young, highborn, accomplished—

Wil. Sir Geoffrey's very objections against me. He says I am a fine gentleman, and has a vehement aversion to that section of mortals, because he implies that a fine gentleman once did him a mortal injury. But you seem moved—dear lady, what is your interest in Sir Geoffrey or myself?

Lady. You shall know later. Tell me, did Lucy Thornside ever speak to you of her mother?

Wil. Only to regret, with tears in her eyes, that she had never known a mother—that lady died, I believe, while Lucy was but an infant.

Lady. When you next have occasion to speak to her, say that you have seen a friend of her mother, who has something to impart that may contribute to her father's happiness and her own.

Wil. I will do your bidding this day, and—

Soft. [*without*]. Oh, never mind announcing me, Smart.

Lady [*starting up*]. I would not be seen here—I must be gone. Call on me at nine o'clock this evening; this is my address.

Enter SOFTEAD, as LORD WILMOT is protecting Lady's retreat, and stares aghast.

Wil. [*aside*]. Do not fear him—best little fellow in the world, ambitious to be thought good for nothing, and frightened out of his wits at the sight of a petticoat. [*Aloud, as he attends her out.*] Allow me to escort your Ladyship.

Soft. Ladyship!—lucky dog. But then he's such a villain!

Wil. [*returning, and looking at the address*]. Very mysterious visitor—sign of Crown and Portcullis, Deadman's Lane—a very funereal residence. Ha, Softhead! my Pylades—my second self! *Animæ*—

Soft. Enemy!

Wil. *Dimidium meæ.*

Soft. *Dimi!* that's the oath last in fashion, I warrant. [*With a swagger and a slap on the back.*] *Dimidium meæ*, how d'ye do? But what is that lady?—masked too? Oh, Fred, Fred, you are a monster!

Wil. Monster! ay, horrible! That lady may well wear a mask. She has poisoned three husbands.

Soft. *Dimidium meæ.*

Wil. A mere harmless gallantry has no longer a charm for me.

Soft. Nor for me either! [*Aside.*] Never had.

Wil. Nothing should excite us true men of pleasure but some colossal atrocity, to bring our necks within an inch of the gallows!

Soft. He's a perfect demon! Alas, I shall never come up to his mark!

Enter SMART.

Smart. Mr. Hardman, my Lord.

Wil. Hush! Must not shock Mr. Hardman, the most friendly, obliging man, and so clever—will be a minister some day. But not one of *our* set.

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. And how fares my dear Lord?

Wil. Bravely—and you? Ah! you men who live for others have a hard life of it. Let me present you to my friend, Mr. Shadowly Softhead.

Hard. The son of the great clothier who has such weight in the Guild? I have heard of you from Mr. Easy and others, though never so fortunate as to meet you before, Mr. Softhead.

Soft. *Shadowly* Softhead:—my grandmother was one of the *Shadowlys*—a genteel family that move about Court. She married a Softhead—

Wil. A race much esteemed in the city.

Hard. A new picture, my lord? I'm no very great judge—but it seems to me quite a master-piece.

Wil. I've a passion for art. Sold off my stud to buy that picture. [*Aside.*] And please my poor father. 'Tis a *Murillo*.

Hard. A *Murillo*! you know that *Walpole*, too, has a passion for pictures.—In despair at this moment that he can't find a *Murillo* to hang up in his gallery. If ever you want to corrupt the Prime Minister's virtue, you have only to say, "I have got a *Murillo*."

Wil. Well, if, instead of the pictures, he'll just hang up

the *men* he has bought, you may tell him he shall have my Murillo for nothing!

Hard. Bought! now really, my Lord, this is so vulgar a scandal against Sir Robert. Let me assure your Lordship—

Wil. Lordship! Plague on these titles among friends. Why, if the Duke of Middlesex himself—commonly styled “the Proud Duke”—who said to his Duchess, when she astonished his dignity one day with a kiss, “Madam, my first wife was a Percy, and *she* never took such a liberty;”——*

Hard. Ha! ha! well, “if the Proud Duke”——

Wil. Could deign to come here, we would say, “How d’ye do, my dear Middlesex!”

Soft. So we would, Fred, Middlesex.—Shouldn’t you like to know a Duke, Mr. Hardman?

Hard. I have known one or two—in opposition: and had rather too much of ’em.

Soft. Too much of a Duke! La! I could never have eno’ of a Duke?

Hard. You may live to think otherwise.

Enter SMART.

Smart. His Grace the Duke of Middlesex.

Enter DUKE.

Duke. My Lord Wilmot, your most obedient servant.

Wil. [*Aside.* Now then, courage!] How d’ye do, my dear Middlesex?

Duke. “How d’ye do?” “Middlesex!” Gracious Heaven; what will this age come to?

Hard. [*to SOTHEAD.*] Well, it *may* be the fashion,—yet I could hardly advise you to adopt it.

Soft. But if Fred——

* This well-known anecdote of the Proud Duke of Somerset, and some other recorded traits of the same eminent personage, have been freely applied to the character, intended to illustrate the humour of pride, in the comedy. None of our English memoirs afford, however, instances of that infirmity so extravagant as are to be found in the French. Tallamant has an anecdote of the celebrated *Duchesse de Longueville*, which enlivens the burlesque by a bull that no Irish imagination ever surpassed. A surgeon having probably saved her life by bleeding her too suddenly and without sufficient ceremonial—the *Duchesse* said, on recovering herself, that “he was an insolent fellow to have bled her—in *her presence*.”

Hard. Oh! certainly Fred is an excellent model——

Soft. Yet there's something very awful in a live Duke!

Hard. Tut! a mere mortal like ourselves, after all.

Soft. D'y'e really think so?—upon your honour?

Hard. Sir, I'm sure of it,—upon my honour, a mortal!

Duke [*turning stiffly round, and half rising from his chair in majestic condescension*]. Your Lordship's friends? A good day to you, gentlemen!

Soft. And a good day to yourself. My Lord Du—I mean, my dear boy!—Middlesex, how d'y'e do?

Duke. "Mid!"—"boy!"—"sex!"—"dear!" I must be in a dream.

Wil. [*to SOTFHEAD*]. Apologise to the Duke. [*To HARD-MAN*]. Then hurry him off into the next room. Allow me to explain to your Grace.

Soft. But what shall I say?

Hard. Anything most civil and servile.

Soft. I—I—my Lord Duke, I really most humbly entreat your Grace's pardon, I——

Duke. Small man, your pardon is granted, for your existence is effaced. So far as my recognition is necessary to your sense of being, consider yourself henceforth—annihilated!

Soft. I humbly thank your Grace! Annihilated! what's that?

Hard. Duke's English for excused. [*SOTFHEAD wants to get back to the DUKE*]. What! have not you had enough of the Duke?

Soft. No, now we've made it up. I never bear malice. I should like to know more of him; one can't get at a Duke every day. If he did call me "small man," he is a Duke,—and such a remarkably fine one!

Hard. [*drawing him away*]. You deserve to be haunted by him! No—no! Come into the next room.

[*Exeunt through side-door*. SOTFHEAD very reluctant to leave the DUKE.

Duke. There's something portentous in that small man's audacity.—Quite an aberration of Nature! But we are alone now, we two gentlemen. Your father is my friend, and his son must have courage and honour.

Wil. Faith, I had the courage to say I would call your Grace "Middlesex," and the honour to keep to my word.

So I've given good proof that I've courage and honour enough for anything!

Duke [affectionately]. You're a wild boy. You have levities and follies. But alas! even rank does not exempt its possessor from the faults of humanity. Very strange! My own dead brother—*[with a look of disgust]*.

Wil. Your brother, Lord Henry de Mowbray? My dear Duke, pray forgive me; but I hope there's no truth in what Tonson, the bookseller, told me at Will's,—that your brother had left behind certain Confessions or Memoirs, which are all that might be apprehended from a man of a temper so cynical, and whose success in the gay world was so—terrible. *[Aside.* Determined seducer and implacable cut-throat!]

Duke. Ha! then those Memoirs exist! My brother kept his profligate threat. I shall be ridiculed, lampooned. I, the head of the Mowbrays! Powers above, is nothing on earth, then, left sacred! Can you learn in whose hands is this scandalous record?

Wil. I will try. Leave it to me. I know Lord Henry bore you a grudge for renouncing his connexion, on account of his faults—of humanity! I remember an anecdote how he fought with a husband, some poor devil named Morland, for a boast in a tavern, which—Oh, but we'll not speak of that. We *must* get the Memoir. We gentlemen have all common cause here.

Duke [taking his hand]. Worthy son of your father. You deserve, indeed, the trust that I come to confide to you. Listen. His Majesty, King James, having been deceived by vague promises in the Expedition of 'Fifteen, has very properly refused to imperil his rights again, unless upon the positive pledge of a sufficient number of persons of influence, to risk life and all in his service. Myself and some others, not wholly unknown to you, propose to join in a pledge which our King with such reason exacts. Your assistance, my lord, would be valuable, for you are the idol of the young. Doubts were entertained of your loyalty. I have come to dispel them—a word will suffice. If we succeed, you restore the son of a Stuart; if we fail,—you will go to the scaffold by the side of John Duke of Middlesex! Can you hesitate? or is silence assent?

Wil. My dear Duke, forgive me that I dismiss with a

jest a subject so fatal, if gravely entertained. I have so many other engagements at present that, just to recollect them, I must keep my head on my shoulders. Accept my humblest excuses.

Duke. Accept mine for mistaking the son of Lord Loftus.

[*Goes up to C. D.*

Wil. Lord Loftus again! Stay. Your Grace spoke of persons not wholly unknown to me. I entreat you to explain.

Duke. My Lord, I have trusted you with my own life; but to compromise by a word the life of another!—permit me to remind your Lordship that I am John Duke of Middlesex. [*Exit.*

Wil. Can my father have entangled himself in some Jacobite plot? How shall I find out?—Ha! Hardman, Hardman, I say! Here's a man who finds everything out.

Enter HARDMAN and SOTHEAD.

Sothead, continue annihilated for the next five minutes or so. These books will help to the cessation of your existence, mental and bodily, Mr. Locke, on the Understanding, will show that you have not an innate idea; and the Essay of Bishop Berkely will prove you have not an atom of matter.

Soft. But——

Wil. No buts!—they're the fashion.

Soft. Oh, if they're the fashion——

[*Sits himself at the further end of the room; commences vigorously with Berkely and Locke, first one and then the other, and after convincing himself that they are above his comprehension, gradually subsides from despair into dozing.*

Wil. [*to HARDMAN*]. My dear Hardman, you are the only one of my friends whom, in spite of your politics, my high Tory father condescends to approve of. Every one knows that his family were stout cavaliers attached to the Stuarts.

Hard. [*aside*]. Ah! I guess why the Jacobite Duke has been here. I must look up David Fallen; he is in all the schemes for the Stuarts. Well—and——

Wil. And the Jacobites are daring and numerous; and,

—in short, I should just like to know that my father views things with the eyes of our more wise generation.

Hard. Why not ask him yourself ?

Wil. Alas ! I'm in disgrace ; he even begs me not to come to his house. You see he wants me to marry.

Hard. But your father bade me tell you, he would leave your choice to yourself ;—would marriage then seem so dreadful a sacrifice ?

Wil. Sacrifice ! Leave my choice to myself ? My dear father. [*Rings the hand-bell.*] Smart ! [*Enter SMART.*] Order my coach.

Hard. This impatience looks very like love.

Wil. Pooh ! what do you know about love ?—you,—who love only ambition ? Solemn old jilt, with whom one's never safe from a rival.

Hard. Yes ;—always safe from a rival, both in love and ambition, if one will watch to detect, and then scheme to destroy him.

Wil. Destroy—ruthless exterminator ! May we never be rivals ! Pray keep to ambition.

Hard. [*aside*]. But ambition lures me to love. This fair Lucy Thornsides, as rich as she's fair ! woe indeed to the man who shall be my rival with her. I will call there to-day.

Wil. Then, you'll see my father, and sound him ?

Hard. I will do so.

Wil. You are the best friend I have. If ever I can serve you in return——

[*Exit.*]

Hard. Tut ! in serving my friends, 'tis myself that I serve.

Wil. [*after a moment's thought*]. Now to Lucy. Ha ! Softhead.

Soft. [*waking up*]. Heh !

Wil. [*aside*]. I must put this suspicious Sir Geoffrey on a wrong scent. If Softhead were to make love to the girl—violently—desperately.

Soft. [*yawning*]. I would give the world to be tucked up in bed now !

Wil. I've a project—an intrigue—be all life and all fire ! Why, you tremble——

Soft. With excitement. Proceed !

Wil. There's a certain snarling, suspicious Sir Geoffrey

Thornside, with a beautiful daughter, to whom he is a sort of a one-sided bear of a father—all growl and no hug.

Soft. I know him!

Wil. You. How?

Soft. Why, his most intimate friend is Mr. Goodenough Easy.

Wil. Lucy presented me to a Mistress Barbara Easy. Pretty girl.

Soft. You are not courting her?

Wil. Not at present. Are you?

Soft. Why, my father wants me to marry her.

Wil. You refused?

Soft. No. I did not.

Wil. Had *she* that impertinence?

Soft. No; but her father had. He wished for it once; but since I've become *à la mode*, and made a sensation at St. James's, he says that his daughter shall be courted no more by a man of such fashion. Oh! he's low, Mr. Easy: very good-humoured and hearty, but respectable, sober, and square-toed;—decidedly low!—City bred! So I can't go much to his house; but I see Barbara sometimes at Sir Geoffrey's.

Wil. Excellent! Listen: I am bent upon adding Lucy Thornside to the list of my conquests. But her churl of a father has already given me to understand that he hates a lord——

Soft. Hates a lord! Can such men be?

Wil. And despises a man *à la mode*.

Soft. I knew he was eccentric, but this is downright insanity.

Wil. Brief. I see very well that he'll soon shut his doors in my face, unless I make him believe that it is not his daughter who attracts me to his house; so I tell you what we will do;—you shall make love to Lucy—violent love, you rogue.

Soft. But Sir Geoffrey knows I'm in love with the other.

Wil. That's over. Father refused you—transfer of affection; natural pique and human inconstancy. And, in return, to oblige you, I'll make love just as violent to Mistress Barbara Easy.

Soft. Stop, stop; I don't see the necessity of that.

Wil. Pooh! nothing more clear. Having thus duped

the two lookers on, we shall have ample opportunity to change partners, and hands across, then down the middle and up again.

Enter SMART.

Smart. Your coach waits, my Lord.

Wil. Come along. Fie! that's not the way to conduct a cane. Has not Mr. Pope, our great poet of fashion, given you the nicest instructions in that art?

"Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane."

The cane does not conduct you; you conduct the cane. Thus, with a *debonnair* swing. Now, t'other hand on your haunch; easy, *dégagé*—impudently graceful; with the air of a gentleman, and the heart of a—monster! *Allons! Vive la joie.*

Soft. *Vive la jaw*, indeed. I feel as if I were going to be hanged. *Allons! Vive la jaw!* [Exeunt.]

ACT II.—SCENE I.

Library in the house of SIR GEOFFREY THORNSIDE—At the back a large window opening nearly to the ground—Side-door to an adjoining room—Style of decoration, that introduced from the Dutch in the reign of William III. (old-fashioned, therefore, at the date assigned to the Play)—rich and heavy; oak panels, partly gilt; high-backed chairs, &c.

Enter SIR GEOFFREY and HODGE.

Sir Geof. But I say the dog did howl last night, and it is a most suspicious circumstance.

Hodge. Fegs, my dear Measter, if you'se think that these Lunnon thieves have found out that your honour's rents were paid last woik, mayhap I'd best sleep here in the loibery.

Sir Geof. [aside]. How does he know I keep my monies here?

Hodge. Zooks! I'se the old blunderbuss, and that will boite better than any dog, I'se warrant!

Sir Geof. [Aside.] I begin to suspect him. For ten years have I nursed that viper at my hearth, and now he wants to sleep in my library, with a loaded blunderbuss, in case I should come in and detect him. I see murder in his very face. How blind I've been!] *Hodge,* you are very good—very; come closer. *[Aside.]* What a felon step he has!] But I don't keep my rents here, they're all gone to the banker's.

Hodge. Mayhap I'd best go and lock up the plate; or will you send that to the banker's?

Sir Geof. [Aside.] I wonder if he has got an accomplice at the banker's! It looks uncommonly like it.] No, I'll not send the plate to the banker's, I'll—consider. You've not detected the miscreant who has been flinging flowers into the library the last four days?—or observed any one watching your master when he walks in his garden, from the window of that ugly old house in Deadman's Lane?

Hodge. With the sign of the Crown and Poor Culley! Why, it maun be very leately. 'Tint a week ago 'sin it war empty.

Sir Geof. [Aside.] How he evades the question!—just as

they do at the Old Bailey.] Get along with you and feed the house-dog—he's honest!

Hodge. Yes, your honour.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Geof. I'm a very unhappy man, very. Never did harm to any one—done good to many. And ever since I was a babe in the cradle, all the world have been conspiring and plotting against me. It certainly is an exceedingly wicked world; and what its attraction can be to the other worlds, that they should have kept it spinning through space for six thousand years, I can't possibly conceive—unless they are as bad as itself; I should not wonder. That new theory of attraction is a very suspicious circumstance against the planets—there's a gang of 'em! [*A bunch of flowers is thrown in at the window.*] Heaven defend me! There it is again! This is the fifth bunch of flowers that's been thrown at me through the window—what can it possibly mean?—the most alarming circumstance.

[*Cautiously poking at the flowers with his sword.*]

Mr. Goodenough Easy [*without*]. Yes, Barbara, go and find Mistress Lucy. [*Entering.*] How d'ye do, my hearty?

Sir Geof. Ugh! hearty, indeed!

Easy. Why, what's the matter? what are you poking at those flowers for?—is there a snake in them?

Sir Geof. Worse than that, I suspect! Hem! Good-enough Easy, I believe I may trust you—

Easy. You trusted me once with five thousand pounds.

Sir Geof. Dear, dear, I forgot that. But you paid me back, Easy?

Easy. Of course; but the loan saved my credit, and made my fortune: so the favour's the same.

Sir Geof. Ugh! Don't say that; favours and perfidy go together! a truth I learned early in life. What favours I heaped on my foster-brother. And did not he conspire with my cousin to set my own father against me; and trick me out of my heritage?

Easy. But you've heaped favours as great on the son of that scamp of a foster-brother; and he—

Sir Geof. Ay! but he don't know of them. And then there was my—that girl's mother—

Easy. Ah! that was an affliction which might well turn a man, pre-inclined to suspicion, into a thorough self-tor-

mentor for the rest of his life. But she loved you dearly once, old friend; and were she yet alive, and could be proved guiltless after all——

Sir Geof. Guiltless! Sir?

Easy. Well—well! we agreed never to talk upon that subject. Come, come, what of the nosegay?

Sir Geof. Yes, yes, the nosegay! Hark! I suspect some design on my life. The dog howled last night. When I walk in the garden, somebody or something (can't see what it is) seems at the watch in a window in Deadman's Lane—pleasant name for a street at the back of one's premises! And what looks blacker than all, for five days running, has been thrown in at me, yonder, surreptitiously and anonymously, what you call—a nosegay!

Easy. Ha! ha! you lucky dog!—you are still not bad-looking! Depend on it the flowers come from a woman.

Sir Geof. A woman!—my worse fears are confirmed! In the small city of Placentia, in one year, there were no less than seven hundred cases of slow poisoning, and all by women. Flowers were among the instruments they employed, steeped in laurel water and other mephitic preparations. Those flowers are poisoned. Not a doubt of it!—how very awful!

Easy. But why should any one take the trouble to poison you, Geoffrey?

Sir Geof. I don't know. But I don't know why seven hundred people in one year were poisoned in Placentia. Hodge! Hodge!

Enter HODGE.

Sweep away those flowers!—lock 'em up with the rest in the coal-hole. I'll examine them all chemically, by and by, with precaution. [*Exit HODGE.*] Don't smell at 'em; and, above all, don't let the house-dog smell at 'em.

Easy. Ha! ha!

Sir Geof. [*Aside.* Ugh!—that brute's laughing!—no more feeling than a brick-bat!] Goodenough Easy, you are a very happy man.

Easy. Happy, yes. I could be happy on bread and water.

Sir Geof. And would toast your bread at a conflagration, and fill your jug from a deluge! Ugh! I've a trouble

you are more likely to feel for, as you've a girl of your own to keep out of mischief. A man named Wilmot, and styled "my Lord," has called here a great many times; he pretends he saved my—ahem!—that is, Lucy, from footpads, when she was coming home from your house in a sedan chair. And I suspect that man means to make love to her!—

Easy. Egad! that's the only likely suspicion you've hit on this many a day. I've heard of Lord Wilmot. Soft-head professes to copy him. Soft-head, the son of a trader! he be a loungee at White's and Will's, and dine with wits and fine gentlemen! He live with lords!—he mimic fashion! No! I've respect for even the faults of a man; but I've none for the tricks of a monkey.

Sir Geof. Ugh! you're so savage on Soft-head, I suspect 'tis from envy. Man and monkey, indeed! If a ribbon is tied to the tail of a monkey, it is not the man it enrages; it is some other monkey whose tail has no ribbon!

Easy [*angrily*]. I disdain your insinuations. Do you mean to imply that I am a monkey? I will not praise myself; but at least a more steady, respectable, sober—

Sir Geof. Ugh! sober!—I suspect you'd get as drunk as a lord, if a lord passed the bottle.

Easy. Now, now, now. Take care; you'll put me in a passion.

Sir Geof. There—there—beg pardon. But I fear you've a sneaking respect for a lord.

Easy. Sir, I respect the British Constitution and the House of Peers as a part of it; but as for a lord in himself, with a mere handle to his name, a paltry title! That can have no effect on a Briton of independence and sense. And that's just the difference between Soft-head and me. But as you don't like for a son-in-law the real fine gentleman; perhaps you've a mind to the copy. I am sure you are welcome to Soft-head.

Sir Geof. Ugh! I've other designs for the girl.

Easy. Have you? What? Perhaps your favourite, young Hardman?—by the way, I've not met him here lately.

Enter LUCY and BARBARA.

Lucy. O, my dear father, forgive me if I disturb you; but I did so long to see you!

Sir Geof. Why?

Lucy. Ah, father, is it so strange that your child——

Sir Geof. [*interrupting her*]. Why?

Lucy. Because Hodge told me you'd been alarmed last night—the dog howled! But it was full moon last night, and he will howl at the moon!

Sir Geof. [*aside*]. How did she know it was full moon? I suspect she was looking out of the window——

[*Enter HODGE, announcing LORD WILMOT and MR. SHADOWLY SOFTHEAD.*]*—Wilmot!* my suspicions are confirmed; *she was* looking out of the window! This comes of Shakspeare having written that infernal incendiary trash about Romeo and Juliet!

Enter WILMOT and SOFTHEAD.

Wil. Your servant, ladies;—Sir Geoffrey, your servant. I could not refuse Mr. Softhead's request to inquire after your health.

Sir Geof. I thank your lordship; but when my health wants inquiring after I send for the doctor.

Wil. Is it possible you can do anything so dangerous and rash?

Sir Geof. How?—how?

Wil. Send for the very man who has an interest in your being ill!

Sir Geof. [*aside*]. That's very true. I did not think he had so much sense in him!

[*SIR GEOFFREY and EASY retire up the stage.*]

Wil. I need not inquire how you are, ladies. When Hebe retired from the world, she divided her bloom between you. Mistress Barbara, vouchsafe me the honour a queen accords to the meanest of her gentlemen.

[*Kisses BARBARA's hand, and leads her aside, conversing in dumb show.*]

Soft. Ah, Mistress Lucy, vouchsafe me the honour which—*[Aside.* But she don't hold her hand in the same position.]

Easy. Bravo!—bravo! Master Softhead!—*Encore!*

Soft. Bravo!—*Encore!* I don't understand you, Mr. Easy.

Easy. That bow of yours! Perfect. Plain to see you

have not forgotten the old Dancing Master in Crooked Lane.

Soft. [*Aside.* I'm not an inconstant man ; but I'll show that City fellow, there are other ladies in town besides his daughter.]—*Dimidum meæ*, how pretty you are, Mistress Lucy ! [*Walks aside with her.*]

Sir Geof. That popinjay of a lord is more attentive to Barbara than ever he was to the other.

Easy. Hey ! hey ! D'ye think so ?

Sir Geof. I suspect he has heard how rich you are.

WILMOT and BARBARA approaching.

Bar. Papa, Lord Wilmot begs to be presented to you.

[*Bows interchanged.* *WILMOT offers snuff-box.* *EASY* at first declines, then accepts—sneezes violently ; unused to snuff.]

Sir Geof. He ! he ! quite clear !—titled fortune-hunter. Over head and ears in debt, I dare say. [*Takes WILMOT aside.*] Pretty girl, Mistress Barbara ! Eh ?

Wil. Pretty ! Say beautiful !

Sir Geof. He ! he ! Her father will give her fifty thousand pounds down on the wedding-day.

Wil. I venerate the British merchant who can give his daughter fifty thousand pounds ! What a smile she has ! [*Hooking his arm into SIR GEOFFREY'S.*] I say, Sir Geoffrey, you see I'm very shy—bashful, indeed—and Mr. Easy is watching every word I say to his daughter : so embarrassing ! Couldn't you get him out of the room ?

Sir Geof. Mighty bashful, indeed ! Turn the oldest friend I have out of my room, in order that you may make love to his daughter ! [*Turns away.*]

Wil. [*to EASY.*] I say, Mr. Easy. My double, there, Softhead, is so shy—bashful, indeed—and that suspicious Sir Geoffrey is watching every word he says to Mistress Lucy : so embarrassing ! Do get your friend out of the room, will you !

Easy. Ha ! ha ! Certainly, my lord. [*Aside.* I see he wants to be alone with my Barbara. What will they say in Lombard-street, when she's my lady ? Shouldn't wonder if they returned me M.P. for the city.] Come into the next room, Geoffrey ; and tell me your designs for Lucy.

Sir Geof. Oh, very well! You wish to encourage that pampered young—Satrap! How he does love a lord, and how a lord does love fifty thousand pounds! He! he!

[*Exeunt SIR GEOFFREY and EASY.*]

Wil. [*running to LUCY and pushing aside SOTHEAD*]. Return to your native allegiance. Truce with the enemy and exchange of prisoners.

[*Leads LUCY aside—she rather grave and reluctant.*]

Bar. So, you'll not speak to me, Mr. Softhead; words are too rare with you fine gentlemen to throw away upon old friends.

Soft. Ahem!

Bar. You don't remember the winter evenings you used to pass at our fire-side? nor the mistletoe bough at Christmas? nor the pleasant games at Blind-man's Buff and Hunt the Slipper? nor the strong tea I made you when you had the migraine? Nor how I prevented your eating Banbury cake at supper, when you know it always disagrees with you?—But I suppose you are so hardened that you can eat Banbury cake every night now!—I'm sure 'tis nothing to me!

Soft. Those recollections of one's early innocence are very melting! One renounces a great deal of happiness for renown and ambition.—Barbara!

Bar. Shadowly!

Soft. However one may rise in life—however the fashion may compel one to be a monster——

Bar. A monster!

Soft. Yes, Fred and I are both monsters! Still—still—still—'Ecod, I do love you with all my heart, and that's the truth of it.

WILMOT and LUCY advancing.

Lucy. A friend of my lost mother's. Oh! yes, dear Lord Wilmot, do see her again—learn what she has to say. There are times when I so long to speak of that—my mother; but my father shuns even to mention her name. Ah, he must have loved her well!

Wil. What genuine susceptibility! I have found what I have sought all my life, the union of womanly feeling and childlike innocence.

[*Attempts to take her hand: LUCY withdraws it coyly.*]

Nay, nay, if the renunciation of all youthful levities and follies, if the most steadfast adherence to your side—despite all the chances of life, all temptations, all dangers——

[HARDMAN'S voice without.]

Bar. Hist ! some one coming.

Wil. Change partners ; hands across. My angel Barbara !

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. Lord Wilmot here !

Wil. What ! does he know Sir Geoffrey ?

Bar. Oh yes. Sir Geoffrey thinks there's nobody like him.

Wil. Well met, my dear Hardman. So you are intimate here ?

Hard. Ay ; and you ?

Wil. An acquaintance in its cradle. Droll man, Sir Geoffrey ; I delight in odd characters. Besides, here are other attractions.

[Returning to BARBARA.]

Hard. [aside.] If he be my rival ! Hum ! I hear from David Fallen that his father's on the brink of high treason ! That secret gives a hold on the son.

[Joins LUCY.]

Wil. [to BARBARA]. You understand ; 'tis a compact. You will favour my stratagem ?

Bar. Yes ; and you'll engage to cure Softhead of his taste for the fashion, and send him back to——the City.

Wil. Since you live in the City, and condescend to regard such a monster !

Bar. Why, we were brought up together. His health is so delicate ; I should like to take care of him. Heigho ! I am afraid 'tis too late, and papa will never forgive his past follies.

Wil. Yet papa seems very good-natured. Perhaps there's another side to his character ?

Bar. Oh yes ! He is such a very independent man, my papa ! and has *such* a contempt for people who go out of their own rank, and make fools of themselves for the sake of example.

Wil. Never fear ; I'll ask him to dine, and open his heart with a cheerful glass.

Bar. Cheerful glass ! You don't know papa—the

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soberest man! If there's anything on which he's severe, 'tis a cheerful glass.

Wil. So, so! does not he *ever*—get a little excited?

Bar. Excited! Don't think of it! Besides, he is so in awe of Sir Geoffrey, who would tease him out of his life, if he could but hear that papa was so inconsistent as to—as to——

Wil. As to get—a little excited? [*Aside.* These hints should suffice me! 'Gad, if I could make him tipsy for once in a way!—I'll try.] Adieu, my sweet Barbara, and rely on the zeal of your faithful ally. Stay; tell Mr. Easy that he must lounge into Will's. I will look out for him there in about a couple of hours. He'll meet many friends from the City, and all the wits and fine gentlemen. *Allons! Vive la joie!* Softhead, we'll have a night of it!

Soft. Ah! those were pleasant nights when one went to bed at half after ten. Heigho!

[*As* *HARDMAN* kisses *LUCY*'s hand, *WILMOT* gaily kisses *BARBARA*'s—*HARDMAN* observes him with a little suspicion—*WILMOT* returns his look lightly and carelessly—*LUCY* and *BARBARA* conscious.

ACT III.—SCENE I.

Will's Coffee-house; occupying the depth of the stage. Various groups; some seated in boxes, some standing. In a box at the side, DAVID FALLEN seated writing.

Enter EASY, speaking to various acquaintances as he passes to the background.

How d'ye do?—Have you seen my Lord Wilmot?
—Good day.—Yes; I seldom come here; but I've promised to meet an intimate friend of mine—Lord Wilmot.
—Servant, sir!—looking for my friend Wilmot:—Oh! not come yet!—hum—ha!—charming young man, Wilmot: head of the mode; generous, but prudent. I know all his affairs.

Enter Newsmen.

Great news! great news! Suspected Jacobite Plot!
Fears of ministers!—Army to be increased!—Great news!
[*Coffee-house frequenters gather round Newsmen—take papers—form themselves into fresh groups.*]

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. I have sent off my letter to Sir Robert Walpole. This place, he must give it; the first favour I have asked. Hope smiles; I am at peace with all men. Now to save Wilmot's father. [*Approaches the box at which DAVID FALLEN is writing, and stoops down, as if arranging his buckle.*] [*To FALLEN.* Hist! Whatever the secret, remember, not a word save to me.]

[*Passes down the stage, and is eagerly greeted by various frequenters of the Coffee-house.*]

Enter LORD LOFTUS.

Lord Loft. Drawer, I engage this box; give me the newspaper. So—"Rumoured Jacobite plot—"

Enter the DUKE OF MIDDLESEX.

Duke. My dear Lord, I obey your appointment. But is not the place you select rather strange?

Lof. Be seated, I pray you. No place so fit for our purpose. First, because its very publicity prevents all suspicion. We come to a coffee-house, where all ranks and all parties assemble, to hear the news, like the rest. And, secondly, we could scarcely meet our agent anywhere else. He is a Tory pamphleteer: was imprisoned for our sake in the time of William and Mary. If we, so well known to be Tories, are seen to confer with him here, 'twill only be thought that we are suggesting some points in a pamphlet. May I beckon our agent?

Duke. Certainly. He risks his life for us; he shall be duly rewarded. Let him sit by our side.—[*LORD LOFTUS motions to DAVID FALLEN, who takes up his pamphlet and approaches openly.*—I have certainly seen somewhere before that very thin man. Be seated, sir. Honourable danger makes all men equal.

Fal. No, my Lord Duke. I know you not. It is the Earl I confer with. [*Aside.* I never stood in *his* hall, with lacqueys and porters.]

Duke. Powers above! That scare-crow rejects my acquaintance! Portentous! [*Stunned and astonished.*]

Lof. Observe, Duke, we speak in a sort of jargon. Pamphlet means messenger. [*To FALLEN aloud.*] Well, Mr. Fallen, when will the pamphlet be ready?

Fal. [*aloud*]. To-morrow, my Lord, exactly at one o'clock.

Duke [*still bewildered*]. I don't understand—

Lof. Hush! Walpole laughs at pamphlets, but would hang messengers. [*Aloud*]. To-morrow, not to-day! Well, more time for—

Fal. Subscribers. Thank you, my Lord. [*Whispering.* Where shall the messenger meet you?]

Lof. At the back of the Duke's new house, there is a quiet, lone place—

Fal. [*whispering*]. By the old mill near the Thames? I know it. The messenger shall be there. The signal word, "Marston Moor." No conversation should pass. But who brings the packet? That's the first step of danger.

Duke [*suddenly rousing himself, and with dignity*]. Then 'tis mine, sir, in right of my birth.

Fal. [*aloud*]. I'll attend to all your Lordship's sugges-

tions; they're excellent, and will startle this vile administration. Many thanks to your Lordship.

[Returns to his table and resumes his writing.

Groups point and murmur. JACOB TONSON advances.

Easy. That pestilent scribbler, David Fallen! Another libellous pamphlet as bitter as the last, I'll swear.

Ton. Bitter as gall, sir, I am proud to say. Your servant; Jacob Tonson, the bookseller,—at your service. I advanced a pound upon it.

Duke. I will meet you in the Mall to-morrow, a quarter after one precisely. We may go now? Powers above!—his mind's distracted—he walks out before me!

Lof. [drawing back at the door]. I follow you, Duke.

Duke. My dear friend—if you really insist on it?

[*Exeunt, bowing.*

Hard. [as the Drawer places the wine, &c., on the table]. Let me offer you a glass of wine, Mr. Fallen—[*Aside.* Well?—]

[FALLEN, who has been writing, pushes the paper towards him.

Hard. [reading]. "At one to-morrow—by the old mill near the Thames—Marston Moor—the Duke in person"—So! We must save these men.—I will call on you in the morning, and concert the means.

Fal. Yes, save, not destroy, these enthusiasts. I'm resigned to the name of a hireling—not to that of a butcher!

Hard. You serve both Whig and Jacobite; do you care then for either?

Fal. Sneering politician! what has either cared for me? I entered the world, devoted heart and soul to two causes—the throne of the Stuart, the glory of Letters. I saw them both as a poet. My father left me no heritage but loyalty and learning. Charles the Second praised my verse, and I starved; James the Second praised my prose, and I starved: the reign of King William—I passed that in prison!

Hard. But the ministers of Anne were gracious to writers.

Fal. And offered me a pension to belie my past life, and write Odes on the Queen who had dethroned her own

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father. I was not then disenchanted—I refused. That's years ago. If I starved, I had fame. Now came my worst foes, my own fellow-writers. What is fame but a fashion? A jest upon Grub Street, a rhyme from young Pope, could jeer a score of gray labourers like me out of their last consolation. Time and hunger tame all. I could still starve myself; I have six children at home—they must live.

Hard. [*Aside.* This man has genius—he might have been a grace to his age.] I'm perplexed; Sir Robert—

Fal. Disdains letters—I've renounced them. He pays services like these. Well—I serve him. Leave me; go!

Hard. [*rising*]. Not so bad as he seems—another side to the character.

Enter Drawer with a letter to HARDMAN.

Hard. [*Aside*]. From Walpole! Now then! my fate—my love—my fortunes!

Easy [*peeping over HARDMAN's shoulder*]. He has got a letter from the Prime Minister, marked “private and confidential.” [*Great agitation.*] After all, he is a very clever fellow.

[*Coffee-house frequenters evince the readiest assent, and the liveliest admiration.*

Hard. [*advancing and reading the letter*]. “My dear Hardman,—Extremely sorry. Place in question absolutely wanted to conciliate some noble family otherwise dangerous.* Another time, more fortunate. Fully sensible of your valuable service.—ROBERT WALPOLE.”—Refused! Let him look to himself! I will—I will—Alas! he is needed by my country; and I am powerless against him.

[*Sits himself.*

Enter WILMOT and SOTHEAD.

Wil. Drawer! a private room—covers for six—dinner in

* As Walpole was little inclined to make it a part of his policy to conciliate those whose opposition might be dangerous, while he was so fond of power as to be jealous of talent not wholly subservient to him, the reluctance to promote Mr. Hardman, implied in the insincerity of his excuse, may be supposed to arise from his knowledge of that gentleman's restless ambition and determined self-will.

an hour ! * And—Drawer ! Tell Mr. Tonson not to go yet.—Softhead, we'll have an orgy to-night, worthy the days of King Charles the Second.

Softhead, let me present you to our boon companions ; —my friend, Lord Strongbow (hardest drinker in England) ; Sir John Bruin, best boxer in England—threshed Figg ; quarrelsome but pleasant : Colonel Flint—finest gentleman in England, and, out and out, the best fencer ; mild as a lamb, but can't bear contradiction, and, on the point of honour, inexorable. Now, for the sixth. Ha, Mr. Easy ! (I ask him to serve you.) Easy, your hand ! So charmed that you've come. You'll dine with us—give up five invitations on purpose. Do—*sans cérémonie*.

Easy. Why, really, my Lord, a plain sober man like me would be out of place—

Wil. If that's all, never fear. Live with us, and we'll make another man of you, Easy !

Easy. What captivating familiarity ! Well, I cannot resist your Lordship. [*Strutting down the room, and speaking to his acquaintances.*] Yes, my friend Wilmot—Lord Wilmot—will make me dine with him. Pleasant man, my friend Wilmot. We dine together to-day.

[*SOFTHHEAD retires to the background with the other invited guests ; but trying hard to escape SIR JOHN BRUIN, the boxer, and COL. FLINT, the fencer, fastens himself on EASY with an air of patronage.*]

Wil. [*Aside*. Now to serve the dear Duke.] You have not yet brought the memoir of a late Man of Quality.

Ton. Not yet, my Lord ; just been trying ; hard work. [*Wipes his forehead.*] But the person who has it is luckily very poor ! one of my own authors.

Wil. [*Aside*. His eye turns to that forlorn-looking spectro I saw him tormenting.] That must be one of your authors : he looks so lean, Mr. Tonson ?

Ton. Hush ; that's the man ! made a noise in his day ; David Fallen.

Wil. David Fallen, whose books, when I was but a

* It was not the custom at Will's to serve dinners ; and the exception in favour of my Lord Wilmot proves his influence as a man *à la mode*.

schoolboy, made me first take to reading,—not as taskwork, but pleasure. How much I do owe him!

[*Bows very low to MR. FALLEN.*

Ton. My Lord bows very low! Oh, if your Lordship knows Mr. Fallen, pray tell him not to stand in his own light. I would give him a vast sum for the memoir,—two hundred guineas; on my honour I would! [*Whispering.*] Scandal, my Lord; sell like wild-fire.—I say, Mr. Hardman, I observed you speak to poor David. Can't you help me here? [*Whispering.*] Lord Henry de Mowbray's Private Memoirs! Fallen has them, and refuses to sell. Love Adventures; nuts for the public. Only just got a peep myself. But *such* a confession about the beautiful Lady Morland.

Hard. Hang Lady Morland!

Ton. Besides—shows up his own brother! Jacobite family secrets. Such a card for the Whigs!

Hard. Confound the Whigs! What do I care?

Wil. I'll see to it, Tonson. Give me Mr. Fallen's private address.

Ton. But pray be discreet, my Lord. If that knave Curll should get wind of the scent, he'd try to spoil my market with my own author. The villain!

Wil. [*Aside.* Curll? Why, I have mimick'd Curll so exactly that Pope himself was deceived, and, stifling with rage, ordered me out of the room. I have it! Mr. Curll shall call upon Fallen the first thing in the morning, and outbid Mr. Tonson.] Thank you, sir. [*Taking the address.*] Moody, my Hardman? some problem in political ethics? You turn away,—you have a grief you'll not tell me—why, this morning I asked you a favour; from that moment I had a right to your confidence, for a favour degrades when it does not come from a friend.

Hard. You charm, you subdue me, and I feel for once how necessary to a man is the sympathy of another. Your hand, Wilmot. This is secret—I, too, then presume to love. One above me in fortune; it may be in birth. But a free state lifts those it employs to a par with its nobles. A post in the Treasury of such nature is vacant; I have served the minister, men say, with some credit; and I asked for the gift without shame—'twas my due. Walpole needs the office, not for reward to the zealous, but for bribe to

the doubtful. See, [*giving letter*] "Noble family to conciliate." Ah, the drones have the honey!

Wil. [*reading and returning the letter*]. And had you this post, you think you could gain the lady you love?

Hard. At least it would have given me courage to ask. Well, well, well,—a truce with my egotism,—you at least, my fair Wilmot, fair in form, fair in fortune, you need fear no rebuff where you place your affections.

Wil. Why, the lady's father sees only demerits in what you think my advantages.

Hard. You mistake, I know the man much better than you do ; and look, even now he is gazing upon you as fondly as if on the coronet that shall blazon the coach of my lady, his daughter.

Wil. Gazing on me?—where?

Hard. Yonder—Ha! is it not Mr. Easy, whose——

Wil. Mr. Easy! you too taken in! Hark, secret for secret—'tis Lucy Thornside I love.

Hard. You—stun me!

Wil. But what a despot love is, allows no thought, not its slave! They told me below that my father had been here; have you seen him?

Hard. Ay.

Wil. And sounded?

Hard. No—better than that—I have taken precautions. I must leave you now; you shall know the result to-morrow afternoon. [*Aside.* Your father's life in these hands—his ransom what I please to demand.—Ah, joy! I am myself once again. Fool to think man could be my friend! Ah, joy! born but for the strife and the struggle, it is only 'mid foes that my invention is quickened! Half-way to my triumph, now that I know the rival to vanquish!] [*To FALLEN.* Engage the messenger at once, forget not. Nothing else till I see you.] [*To WILMOT.*] Your hand once again. To-day I'm your envoy; [*Aside:* to-morrow your master.]

[*FALLEN folds up papers and exit.*]

Wil. The friendliest man that ever lived since the days of Damon and Pythias: I'm a brute if I don't serve him in return. To lose the woman he loves for want of this pitiful place. Saint Cupid forbid! Let me consider! Many sides to a character—I think I could here hit the

right one better than Hardman. Ha! ha! Excellent! My Murillo! I'll not sell myself, but I'll buy the Prime Minister! Excuse me, my friends; urgent business; I shall be back ere the dinner hour; the room is prepared. Drawer, show in these gentlemen: Hardman shall have his place and his wife, and I'll bribe the arch-briber! Ho! my lackies, my coach, there! Ha, ha! bribe the Prime Minister! There never was such a fellow as I am for crime and audacity. *[Exit WILMOT.]*

Colonel Flint. Your arm, Mr. Softhead.

Soft. And Fred leaves me in the very paws of this tiger! *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.

The Library in SIR GEOFFREY'S House.

Enter SIR GEOFFREY.

I'm followed! I'm dogged! I go out for a walk unsuspectingly; and behind creeps a step, pit, pat; feline and stealthy; I turn, not a soul to be seen—I walk on; pit, pat, stealthy and feline! turn again; and lo! a dark form like a phantom, muffled and masked—just seen and just gone. Ouf! The plot thickens around me—I can struggle no more. *[Sinks into a seat.]*

Enter LUCY.

Who is there?

Lucy. But your child, my dear father.

Sir Geof. Child, ugh! what do you want?

Lucy. Ah, speak to me gently. It is your heart that I want!

Sir Geof. Heart—I suspect I'm to be coaxed out of something!—Eh; eh! Why she's weeping. What ails thee, poor darling?

Lucy. So kind. Now I have courage to tell you. I was sitting alone, and I thought to myself—"my father often doubts of me—doubts of all"—

Sir Geof. Ugh—what now?

Lucy. "Yet his true nature is generous—it could not always have been so. Perhaps in old times he has been

deceived where he loved. Ah, his Lucy, at least, shall never deceive him." So I rose and listened for your foot-step—I heard it—and I am here—here, on your bosom, my own father !

Sir Geof. You'll never deceive me—right, right—go on, pretty one, go on. [*Aside.* If she should be my child after all ?]

Lucy. There is one who has come here lately—one who appears to displease you—one whom you've been led to believe comes not on my account, but my friend's. It is not so, my father ; it is for me that he comes. Let him come no more—let me see him no more—for—for—I feel that his presence might make me too happy—and that would grieve you, O my father !

[*Mask appears at the window watching.*

Sir Geof. [*Aside.* She must be my child ! Bless her !] I'll never doubt you again. I'll bite out my tongue if it says a harsh word to you. I'm not so bad as I seem. Grieve me?—yes, it would break my heart. You don't know these gay courtiers—I do !—tut—tut—tut—don't cry. How can I console her ?

Lucy. Shall I say ?—let me speak to you of my mother.

Sir Geof. [*recoiling*]. Ah !

Lucy. Would it not soothe you to hear that a friend of hers was in London, who—

Sir Geof. [*rising, and a change in his whole deportment*]. I forbid you to speak to me of your mother,—she dishonoured me—

Mask [*in a low voice of emotion*]. It is false !

[*Mask disappears.*

Sir Geof. [*starting*]. Did you say "false ?"

Lucy [*sobbing*]. No—no—but my heart said it !

Sir Geof. Strange ; or was it but my own fancy ?

Lucy. Oh, father, father !—How I shall pity you if you discover that your suspicions erred. And again I say—I feel—feel in my heart of woman—that the mother of the child who so loves and honours you, was innocent.

Hardman's voice without. Is Sir Geoffrey at home ?

[*LUCY starts up, and exit.—Twilight.—During the preceding dialogue in the scene, the stage has gradually darkened.*

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. Sir Geoffrey, you were deceived; Lord Wilmot has no thought of Mr. Easy's daughter.

Sir Geof. I know that—Lucy has told me all, and begged me not to let him come here again.

Hard. [*joyfully*]. She has! Then she does not love this Lord Wilmot?—But still be on your guard against him. Remember the arts of corruption—the emissary—the letter—the go-between—the spy!

Sir Geof. Arts! Spy! Ha! if Easy was right after all. If those flowers thrown in at the window; the watch from that house in the lane; the masked figure that followed me; all bode designs but on Lucy——

Hard. Flowers have been thrown in at the window? You've been watched? A masked figure has followed you? One question more. All this since Lord Wilmot knew Lucy?

Sir Geof. Yes, to be sure; how blind I have been!

[*Masked figure appears.*

Hard. Ha! look yonder! Let me track this mystery [*Figure disappears*]: and if it conceal a scheme of Lord Wilmot's against your daughter's honour, it shall need not your sword to protect her.

[*Leaps from the window.*

Sir Geof. What does he mean? Not my sword? Zounds! he don't think of his own! If he does, I'll discard him. I'm not a coward, to let other men risk their lives in my quarrel. Served as a volunteer under Marlbro', at Blenheim; and marched on a cannon! Whatever my faults, no one can say I'm not brave. [*Starting.*] Ha! bless my life! What is that? I thought I heard something—I'm all on a tremble! Who the deuce can be brave when he's surrounded by poisoners—followed by phantoms; with an ugly black face peering in at his window?—Hodge, come and bar up the shutters—lock the door—let out the house-dog! Hodge! Hodge! Where on earth is that scoundrel?

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

The Streets—in perspective, an Alley inscribed Deadman's Lane—a large, old-fashioned, gloomy House in the Corner, with the door on the stage, above which is impanelled a sign of the Crown and Portcullis. Enter a Female Figure, masked—looks round, pauses, and enters the door.—Dark—Lights down.

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. Ha! enters that house. I have my hand on the clue! some pretext to call on the morrow, and I shall quickly unravel the skein. [*Exit.*

Goodenough Easy [*singing without*].—

“ Old King Cole
Was a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul was he—

[*Entering, with LORD WILMOT and SOTHEAD, EASY, his dress disordered, a pipe in his mouth, in a state of intoxication, hilarious, musical, and oratorical.—SOTHEAD in a state of intoxication, abject, remorseful, and lachrymose—WILMOT sober, but affecting inebriety.*

“ He called for his pipe, and he called for his bowl
And he called for his fiddlers three.”

Wil. Ha, ha! I imagine myself like Bacchus between Silenus and his—ass!

Easy. Wilmot, you're a jolly old soul, and I'll give you my Barbara.

Soft. [*blubbling*]. Heh! heh! heh! Betrayed in my tenderest affections.

Wil. My dear Mr. Easy, I've told you already that I'm pre-engaged.

Easy. Pre-engaged! that's devilish unhandsome! But now I look at you, you do seem double: and if you're double, you're not single; and if you're not single, why you can't marry Barbara, for that would be bigamy! But I don't care; you're a jolly old soul!

Wil. Not a bit of it. Quite mistaken, Mr. Easy. But if you want, for a son-in-law, a jolly old soul—there he is!

Soft. [*bursting out afresh*]. Heh! heh! heh!

Easy. Hang a lord! What's a lord? I'm a respectable, independent family Briton!—Softhead, give us your fist: you're a jolly old soul, and *you* shall have Barbara!

Soft. Heh! heh! I'm not a jolly old soul. I'm a sinful, wicked, miserable monster. Heh! heh!

Easy. What's a monster? I like a monster! My girl shan't go a-begging any farther. You're a precious good fellow, and your father's an alderman, and has got a great many votes, and I'll stand for the City: and *you shall* have my Barbara.

Soft. I don't deserve her, Mr. Easy; I don't deserve such an angel! I'm not precious good. Lords and tigers have corrupted my innocence. Heh! heh! I'm going to be hanged.

Watch. [*without*]. Half-past eight o'clock!

Wil. Come along, gentlemen; we shall have the watch on us!

Easy.

“And the bands that guard the City,
Cried—‘Rebels, yield or die!’”

Enter Watchman.

Watch. Half-past eight o'clock!—move on! move on!

Easy. Order, order! Mr. Vice and gentlemen, here's a stranger disturbing the harmony of the evening. I knock him down for a song. [*Seizes the Watchman's rattle.*] Half-past Eight, Esq., on his legs! Sing, sir; I knock you down for a song.

Watch. Help! help! Watch! watch!

[*Cries within*, “Watch!”]

Soft. Hark! the officers of justice! My wicked career is approaching its close!

Easy [*who has got astride on the Watchman's head, and persuades himself that the rest of the Watchman is the table*]. Mr. Vice and gentlemen, the toast of the evening—what's the matter with the table? 'Tis bobbing up and down. The table's drunk! Order for the chair—you table, you! [*Thumps the Watchman with the rattle.*] Fill your glasses—a bumper toast. Prosperity to the City of London—nine times nine—Hip, hip, hurrah! [*Waves the rattle over his head; the rattle springs, and makes all the noise of which*

rattles are capable.] [Amazed.] Why, the Chairman's hammer is as drunk as the table!

Enter Watchmen with staves, springing their rattles.

Wil. [*drawing* SOFTHHEAD *off into a corner*]. Hold your tongue—they'll not see us here!

Watch. [*escaping*]. Murder!—murder!—this is the fellow!—most desperate ruffian.

[EASY *is upset by the escape of the Watchman, and, after some effort to remove him otherwise, the Guardians of the Night hoist him on their shoulders.*

Easy. I'm being chaired member for the City! Freemen and Electors! For this elevation to the post of member for your metropolis, I return you my heartfelt thanks! Steady there, steady! The proudest day of my life.—'Tis the boast of the British Constitution that a plain, sober man like me may rise to honours the most exalted! Long live the British Constitution. Hip—hip—hurrah!

[*Is carried off waving the rattle. SOFTHHEAD continues to weep in speechless sorrow.*

Wil. [*coming forth*]. Ha! ha! ha!—My family Briton being chaired for the City! "So severe on a cheerful glass." Well, he has chosen a son-in-law drunk; and, egad! he shall keep to him sober! Stand up; how do you feel?

Soft. *Feel!* I'm a ruin!

Wil. Faith, I never saw a more mournful one! It must be near Sir Geoffrey's!—Led them here—on my way to this sepulchral appointment, Deadman's Lane. Where the plague can it be? Ha! the very place. Looks like it! How get rid of Softhead.—Ha, ha! I have it. Softhead, awake! the night has begun—the time for monsters and their prey. Now will I lift the dark veil from the mysteries of London. Behold that house, Deadman's Lane!

Soft. Deadman's Lane! I'm in a cold perspiration!

Wil. In that house—under the antique sign of Crown and Portcullis—are such delightful horrors at work as would make the wigs of holy men stand on end! The adventure is dangerous, but deliriously exciting. Into that abode which woman were lost did she enter, which man is oft hanged when he leaves—into that abode will

we plunge, and gaze, like Macbeth, "on deeds without a name."

Enter Masked Figure from the door in Deadman's Lane, and approaches WILMOT, who has, till now, hold of SOFTHEAD.

Soft. Hegh! hegh! hegh! I won't gaze on deeds without a name! I won't plunge into Deadmen's abodes! [*Perceiving the figure.*] Ha! Look there! Dark veil, indeed! Mysteries of London! Horrible apparition, avaunt! [*Breaks from WILMOT, who releases him here, and not till now, as he sees the figure.*] Hegh! hegh! I'll go home to my mother. [*Exit.*

[*Mask motions to WILMOT, who follows her into the house.*]

[*Exeunt Mask and WILMOT within the house.*]

ACT IV.—SCENE I.

The Library in SIR GEOFFREY'S house.

HARDMAN and SIR GEOFFREY.

Sir Geof. Yes! I've seen that you're not indifferent to Lucy. But before I approve or discourage, just tell me more of yourself,—your birth, your fortune, past life. Of course, you are the son of a gentleman? [*Aside.*] Now as he speaks truly or falsely I will discard him as a liar, or reward him with Lucy's hand.—He turns aside. He will lie!

Hard. Sir, at the risk of my hopes, I will speak the hard truth. "The son of a gentleman!" I think not. My infancy passed in the house of a farmer; the children with whom I played told me I was an orphan. I was next dropped, how I know not, in the midst of that rough world called school. "You have talent," said the master, "but you're idle; you have no right to holidays; you must force your way through life; you are sent here by charity."

Sir Geof. Charity! *There*, the old fool was wrong!

Hard. My idleness vanished—I became the head of the school. Then I resolved no longer to be the pupil of—Charity. At the age of sixteen I escaped, and took for my motto—the words of the master—"You must force your way through life." Hope and pride whispered—"You'll force it!"

Sir Geof. Poor fellow! What then?

Hard. Eight years of wandering, adventure, hardship, and trial. I often wanted bread—never courage. At the end of those years I had risen—to what? A desk at a lawyer's office in Norfolk.—

Sir Geof. [*Aside.*] My own lawyer? where I first caught trace of him again.

Hard. Party spirit ran high in town. Politics began to bewitch me. There was a Speaking Club, and I spoke.

My ambition rose higher—took the flight of an author. I came up to London with ten pounds in my pocket, and a work on the "State of the Nation." It sold well; the publisher brought me four hundred pounds. "Vast fortunes," said he, "are made in the South Sea Scheme. Venture your hundreds,—I'll send you a broker."——

Sir Geof. He! he! I hope he was clever, that broker!

Hard. Clever indeed: in a fortnight he said to me, "Your hundreds have swelled into thousands. For this money I can get you an Annuity on land, just enough for a parliamentary qualification." The last hint fired me—I bought the Annuity. You now know my fortune, and how it was made.

Sir Geof. [*Aside*]. He! he! I must tell this to Easy: how he'll enjoy it.

Hard. Not long after, at a political coffee-house, a man took me aside. "Sir," said he, "you are Mr. Hardman who wrote the famous work on 'The State of the Nation.' Will you come into Parliament? We want a man like you for our borough; we'll return you free of expense; not a shilling of bribery."

Sir Geof. He! he! Wonderful! not a shilling of bribery.

Hard. The man kept his word, and I came into Parliament—inexperienced and friendless. I spoke, and was laughed at; spoke again, and was listened to; failed often; succeeded at last. Here, yesterday, in ending my tale I must have said, looking down, "Can you give your child to a man of birth more than doubtful; and of fortunes so humble?" Yet aspiring even then to the hand of your heiress, I wrote to Sir Robert for a place just vacated by a man of high rank, who is raised to the peerage. He refused.

Sir Geof. Of course. [*Aside*.] I suspect he's very rash and presuming.

Hard. To-day the refusal is retracted—the office is mine.

Sir Geof. [*astonished and aside*]. Ha! I had no hand in that!

Hard. I am now one—if not of the highest—yet still one of that Government through which the Majesty of England administers her laws. And, with front erect, I say to you—as I would to the first peer of the realm—"I

have no charts of broad lands, and no roll of proud fathers. But alone and unfriended, I have fought my way against Fortune. Did your ancestors more? My country has trusted the new man to her councils, and the man whom she honours is the equal of all."

Sir Geof. Brave fellow, your hand. Win Lucy's consent, and you have mine. Hush! no thanks! Now listen; I have told you my dark story—these flowers cannot come from Wilmot. I have examined them again—they are made up in the very form of the posies I had the folly to send, in the days of our courtship, to the wife who afterwards betrayed me——

Hard. Be not so sure that she betrayed. No proof but the boast of a profligate.

Sir Geof. Who had been my intimate friend for years—so that, O torture! I am haunted with the doubt whether my heiress be my own child! and to whom (by the confession of a servant) she sent a letter in secret the very day on which I struck the mocking boast from the villain's lips, in a public tavern. Ah, he was always a wit and a scoffer—perhaps it is from him that these flowers are sent, in token of gibe and insult. He has discovered the man he dishonoured, in spite of the change of name——

Hard. You changed your name for an inheritance. You have not told me that which you formerly bore.

Sir Geof. Morland?

Hard. Morland—Ha—and the seducer's——

Sir Geof. Lord Henry de Mowbray——

Hard. The reprobate brother of the Duke of Middlesex! He died a few months since.

Sir Geof. [*sinking down*]. Died too! Both dead!

Hard. [*Aside*]. Tonson spoke of Lord Henry's Memoir—Confession about Lady Morland in Fallen's hands.—I will go to Fallen at once. [*Aloud.*] You have given me a new clue. I will follow it up.—When can I see you again?

Sir Geof. I'm going to Easy's—you'll find me there all the morning. But don't forget Lucy,—we must save her from Wilmot.

Hard. Fear Wilmot no more.—This day he shall abandon his suit. [*Exit HARDMAN.*]

Sir Geof. Hodge!—Well—well——

Enter HODGE.

—Hodge, take your hat and your bludgeon—attend me to the City. [*Aside.*] She'll be happy with Hardman. Ah! if she were my own child after all!

[*Exeunt* SIR GEOFFREY and HODGE.]

SCENE II.

DAVID FALLEN'S *Garret*. *The scene resembling that of Hogarth's "Distracted Poet."*

Fal. [*opening the casement*]. So, the morning air breathes fresh! One moment's respite from drudgery. Another line to this poem, my grand bequest to my country! Ah! this description; unfinished; good, good.

"Methinks we walk in dreams on fairy land
Where—golden ore—lies mix'd with—"*

Enter PADDY.

Paddy. Please, sir, the milkwoman's score!

Fal. Stay, stay;—

"Lies mixed with—common sand!"

Eh? Milkwoman? She must be paid, or the children—I—I—[*Fumbling in his pocket, and looking about the table*]. There's another blanket on the bed; pawn it.

Paddy. Agh, now! don't be so ungrateful to your ould friend, the blanket. When Mr. Tonson, the great book-shiller, tould me, says he, "Paddy, I'd giv two hundergould guineas for the papursh Mr. Fallen has in his disk!"

Fal. Go, go!

[*Knock.*

Paddy. Agh, murther! Who can that be distarbin' the door at the top of the mornin'?

[*Exit.*

Fal. Oh! that fatal Memoir! My own labours scarce keep me from starving, and this wretched scrawl of a profligate worth what to me were Golconda! Heaven sustain me! I'm tempted.

* As it would be obviously presumptuous to assign to an author so eminent as Mr. David Fallen, any verses composed by a living writer, the two lines in the text are taken from Mr. Dryden's *Indian Emperor*.

Enter PADDY, and WILMOT disguised as EDMUND CURLL.

Paddy. Stoop your head, sir. 'Tis not a dun, sir; 'tis Mr. Curll; says he's come to outbid Mr. Tonson, sir.

Fal. Go quick; pawn the blanket. Let me think my children are fed. [*Exit PADDY.*] Now, sir, what do you want?

Wil. [*taking out his handkerchief and whimpering*]. My dear good Mr. Fallen—no offence—I do so feel for the distress of genius. I am a bookseller, but I have a heart—and I'm come to buy—

Fal. Have you? this poem? it is nearly finished—twelve books—twenty years' labour—twenty-four thousand lines!—ten pounds, Mr. Curll, ten pounds?

Wil. Price of *Paradise Lost*! Can't expect such prices for poetry now-a-days, my dear Mr. Fallen. Nothing takes that is not sharp and spicy. Hum! I hear you have some most interesting papers; private Memoirs and Confessions of a Man of Quality recently deceased. Nay, nay, Mr. Fallen! don't shrink back; I'm not like that shabby dog, Tonson. Three hundred guineas for the Memoir of Lord Henry de Mowbray.

Fal. Three hundred guineas for that garbage!—not ten for the Poem!—and—the children! Well! [*Takes out the Memoir in a portfolio, splendidly bound, with the arms and supporters of the Mowbrays blazoned on the sides.*] Ah!—but the honour of a woman—the secrets of a family—the—

Wil. [*grasping at the portfolio which FALLEN still detains*]. Nothing sells better, my dear, dear Mr. Fallen! But how, how did you come by these treasures, my excellent friend?

Fal. How? Lord Henry gave them to me himself on his death-bed.

Wil. Nay; what could he give them for, but to publish, my sweet Mr. Fallen; no doubt to immortalize all the ladies who loved him.

Fal. No, sir; profligate as he was, and vile as may be much in this Memoir, that was not his dying intention, though it might be his first. There was a lady he had once foully injured—the sole woman he had ever loved eno' for remorse. This Memoir contains a confession that might serve to clear the name he himself had aspersed; and in

the sudden repentance of his last moments, he bade me seek the lady, and place the whole in her hands, to use as best might serve to establish her innocence.

Wil. How could you know the lady, my benevolent friend?

Fal. I did not; but she was supposed to be abroad with her father,—a Jacobite exile,—and I, then a Jacobite agent, had the best chance to trace her.

Wil. And you did?

Fal. But to hear she had died somewhere in France.

Wil. Then, of course you may *now* gratify our intelligent Public for your own personal profit. Clear as day, my magnanimous friend! Three hundred guineas! I have 'em here in a bag!

Fal. Begone! I will not sell man's hearth to the public.

Wil. [*Aside.* Noble fellow!] Gently, gently, my too warm, but high-spirited friend! To say the truth, I don't come on my own account. To whom, my dear sir, since the lady is dead, *should* be given these papers, if unfit for a virtuous, but inquisitive public? Why, surely to Lord Henry's nearest relation. I am employed by the rich Duke of Middlesex. Name your terms.

Fal. Ha! ha! Then at last he comes crawling to me, your proud Duke? Sir, years ago, when a kind word from his Grace, a nod of his head, a touch of his hand, would have turned my foes into flatterers, I had the meanness to name him my patron—inscribed to him a work, took it to his house, and waited in his hall among porters and lackeys—till, sweeping by to his carriage, he said, "Oh! you are the poet? take this,"—and extending his alms, as if to a beggar. "You look very thin, sir; stay and dine with my people." People—his servants!

Wil. Calm yourself, my good Mr. Fallen! 'tis his Grace's innocent way with us all.

Fal. Go! let him know what these Memoirs contain! They would make the proud Duke the butt of the town—the jeer of the lackeys, who jeered at my rags; expose his frailties, his follies, his personal secrets. Tell him this; and then say that my poverty shall not be the tool of his brother's revenge: but my pride shall not stoop from its pedestal to take money from him. Now, sir, am I right? Reply, not as tempter to pauper; but if one spark of manhood be in you, as man speaks to man.

Wil. [*resuming his own manner*]. I reply, sir, as man to man, and gentleman to gentleman. I am Frederick, Lord Wilmot. Pardon this imposture. The Duke is my father's friend. I am here to obtain, what it is clear that he alone should possess. Mr. Fallen, your works first raised me from the world of the senses, and taught me to believe in such nobleness as I now hope for in you. Give me this record to take to the Duke—no price, sir ; for such things are priceless—and let me go hence with the sight of this poverty before my eyes, and on my soul the grand picture of the man who has spurned the bribe to his honour, and can humble by a gift the great prince who insulted him by alms.

Fal. Take it—take it ! [*Gives the portfolio.*] I am saved from temptation. God bless you, young man !

Wil. Now you indeed make me twofold your debtor—in your books, the rich thought ; in yourself the heroic example. Accept from my superfluities, in small part of such debt, a yearly sum equal to that which your poverty refused as a bribe from Mr. Tonson.

Fal. My Lord—my Lord— [*Bursts into tears.*]

Wil. Oh, trust me the day shall come, when men will feel that it is not charity we owe to the ennoblers of life—it is tribute ! When your Order shall rise with the civilization it called into being ; and shall refer its claim to just rank among freemen, to some Queen whom even a Milton might have sung, and even a Hampden have died for.

Fal. O dream of my youth ! My heart swells and chokes me !

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. What's this ? Fallen weeping ?—Ah ! is not that the tyrannical sneak, Edmund Curl ?—

Wil. [*changing his tone to FALLEN into one of imperiousness*]. Can't hear of the poem, Mr. Fallen. Don't tell me. Ah ! Mr. Hardman [*concealing the portfolio*], your most humble ! Sir—sir—if you want to publish something smart and spicy—Secret Anecdotes of Cabinets—Sir Robert Walpole's Adventures with the Ladies—I'll come down as handsomely as any man in the Row—smart and spicy—

Hard. Offer to bribe me, you insolent rascal !

Wil. Oh, my dear good Mr. Hardman, I've bribed the Premier himself. Ha! ha! Servant, sir; servant.

[*Exit.*

Hard. Loathsome vagabond! My dear Mr. Fallen, you have the manuscript Memoir of Lord Henry de Mowbray. I know its great value. Name your own price to permit me just to inspect it.

Fal. It is gone; and to the hands of his brother, the Duke.

Hard. The Duke! This is a thunder-stroke! Say, sir: you have read this Memoir—does it contain aught respecting a certain Lady Morland?

Fal. It does. It confesses that Lord Henry slandered her reputation as woman in order to sustain his own as a seducer. That part of the Memoir was writ on his death-bed.

Hard. His boast, then——

Fal. Was caused by the scorn of her letter rejecting his suit.

Hard. What joy for Sir Geoffrey! And that letter?

Fal. Is one of the documents that make up the Memoir.

Hard. And these documents are now in the hands of the Duke!

Fal. They are. For, since Lady Morland is dead——

Hard. Are you sure she is dead?

Fal. I only go by report——

Hard. Report often lies. [*Aside.* Who but Lady Morland can this mask be? I will go at once to the house and clear up that doubt myself. But the Duke's appointment! Ah! that must not be forgotten; my rival must be removed ere Lucy can be won. And what hold on the Duke himself to produce the Memoir, if I get the Despatch.] Well, Mr. Fallen, there is no more to be said as to the Memoir. Your Messenger will meet his Grace, as we settled. I shall be close at hand; and mark! the messenger must give me the Despatch which is meant for the Pretender.

[*Exit* HARDMAN.

Enter PADDY.

Paddy. Plase, sur, an' I've paid the milk-score——

Fal. [*interrupting him*]. I'm to be rich—so rich! 'Tis my turn now. I've shared your pittance, you shall share my plenty!

[*Scene closes.*

SCENE III.

The Mall.

Enter SOTHEAD, his arms folded, and in deep thought. He is forming a virtuous resolution.

Soft. Little did I foresee, in the days of my innocence, when Mr. Lillo read to me his affecting tragedy of George Barnwell,* how I myself was to be led on, step by step, to the brink of deeds without a name. Deadman's Lane!—that funereal apparition in black!—a warning to startle the most obdurate conscience!

Enter EASY, recently dismissed from the Watch-house ; slovenly, skulking, and crestfallen.

Easy. Not a coach on the stand! A pretty pickle I'm in if any one sees me! A sober, respectable man like me, to wake in the watch-house, be kept there till noon among thieves and pickpockets, and at last to be fined five shillings for drunkenness and disorderly conduct; all from dining with a lord who had no thoughts of making Barbara my Lady after all!—Dence take him!

Easy. [*discovering SOTHEAD*]. Softhead! how shall I escape him?

Soft. [*discovering EASY*]. Easy! WHAT A FALL! I'll appear not to remember. Barbara's father should not feel degraded in the eyes of a wretch like myself! How d'ye do, Mr. Easy? You're out early to-day.

Easy. [*Aside*. Ha! He was so drunk himself he has forgotten all about it.] Yes, a headache. You were so pleasant at dinner. I wanted the air of the park.

Soft. Why, you look rather poorly, Mr. Easy!

Easy. Indeed, I feel so. A man in business can't afford to be laid up—so I thought, before I went home to the City, that I'd just look into—Ha, ha, a seasoned toper like you will laugh when I tell you—I thought I'd just look into the 'pothecary's!

* We have only, I fear, Mr. Softhead's authority for supposing *George Barnwell* to be then written: it was not acted till some years afterwards.

Soft. Just been there myself, Mr. Easy.

[*Showing a phial.*

Easy. [*regarding it with mournful disgust*]. Not taken physic since I was a boy! It looks very nasty!

Soft. 'Tis worse than it looks! And this is called *Pleasure*! Ah! Mr. Easy, don't give way to Fred's fascination; you don't know how it ends.

Easy. Indeed I do [*Aside. It ends in the watch-house*]. And I'm shocked to think what will become of yourself, if you are thus every night led away by a lord, who——

Soft. Hush! talk of the devil—look! he's coming up the Mall!

Easy. He is? then I'm off; I see a sedan-chair. Chair! chair! stop!—chair! chair! [*Exit.*

Enter WILMOT and DUKE.

Duke [*looking at portfolio*]. Infamous indeed! His own base lie against that poor lady, whose husband he wounded. Her very letter attached to it. Ha!—what is this?—Such ribaldry on me! Gracious Heaven! My name thus dragged through the dirt, and by a son of my house! Oh, my Lord, how shall I thank you?

Wil. Thank not me; but the poet, whom your Grace left in the hall.

Duke. Name it not—I'll beg his pardon myself! Adieu; I must go home and lock up this scandal till I've leisure to read and destroy it; never again shall it come to the day! And then, sure that no blot shall be seen in my 'scutcheon, I can peril my life without fear in the cause of my king. [*Exit DUKE.*

Wil. [*chanting*].

“Gather you rosebuds while you may,
For time is still a-flying.”

Since my visit last night to Deadman's Lane, and my hope to give Lucy such happiness, I feel as if I trod upon air. Ah, Softhead! why, you stand there as languid and lifeless, as if you were capable of—fishing!

Soft. I've been thinking——

Wil. Thinking! you *do* look fatigued! What a horrid exertion it must have been to you!

Soft. Ah! Fred, Fred, don't be so hardened. What atrocity did you perpetrate last night?

Wil. Last night? Oh, at Deadman's Lane: monstrous, indeed. And this morning, too, another! Never had so many atrocities on my hands as within the last twenty-four hours. But they are all nothing to that which I perpetrated yesterday, just before dinner. Hark! I bribed the Prime Minister.

Soft. Saints in Heaven!

Wil. Ha! ha! Hit him plump on the jolly blunt side of his character! I must tell you about it. Drove home from Will's; put my Murillo in the carriage, and off to Sir Robert's—shown into his office,—“Ah! my Lord Wilmot,” says he, with that merry roll of his eye; “this is an honour, what can I do for you?”—“Sir Robert,” says I, “we men of the world soon come to the point; 'tis a maxim of yours that all have their price.”—“Not quite that,” says Sir Robert, “but let us suppose that it is.” Another roll of his eye, as much as to say, “I shall get this rogue a bargain!”—“So, Sir Robert,” quoth I, with a bow, “I've come to buy the Prime Minister.”—“Buy me,” cried Sir Robert, and he laughed till I thought he'd have choked; “my price is rather high, I'm afraid.” Then I go to the door, bid my lackeys bring in the Murillo. “Look at that, if you please; about the mark, is it not?” Sir Robert runs to the picture, his breast heaves, his eyes sparkle: “A Murillo!” cries he, “name your price!”—“I have named it.” Then he looks at me so, and I look at him so!—turn out the lackeys, place pen, ink, and paper before him; “That place in the Treasury just vacant, and the Murillo is yours.”—“For yourself?”—“I am charmed,” cried Sir Robert. “No, 'tis for a friend of your own, who's in want of it.”—“Oh, that alters the case: I've so many friends troubled with the same sort of want.”—“Yes, but the Murillo is *genuine*,—pray what are the friends?” Out laughed Sir Robert, “There's no resisting you and the Murillo together! There's the appointment. And now, since your Lordship has bought me, I must insist upon buying your Lordship. Fair play is a jewel.” Then I take my grand holiday air: “Sir Robert,” said I, “you've bought me long ago! you've given us peace where we feared civil war; and a Constitutional King instead of

a despot. And if that's not enough to buy the vote of an Englishman, believe me, Sir Robert, he's not worth the buying." Then he stretched out his bluff hearty hand, and I gave it a bluff hearty shake. He got the Murillo—Hardman the place. And here stand I, the only man in all England, who can boast that he bought the Prime Minister! Faith, you may well call me hardened: I don't feel the least bit of remorse.

Soft. Hardman! you got Hardman the place?

Wil. I did not say Hardman—

Soft. You did say Hardman. But as 'tis a secret that might get you into trouble, I'll keep it.—Yet, *Dimidium meæ*, that's not behaving much like a monster?

Wil. Why, it does seem betraying the Good Old Cause;—but if there's honour among thieves, there is among monsters; and Hardman is in the same scrape as ourselves—in love;—this place may secure him the hand of the lady. But mind—he's not to know I've been meddling with his affairs. Hang it! no one likes that. Not a word then—

Soft. Not a word. My dear Fred, I'm so glad you're not so bad as you seem. I'd half a mind to desert you; but I have not the heart; and I'll stick by you as long as I live!

Wil. [*Aside*]. Whew! This will never do! Poor dear little fellow! I'm sorry to lose him; but my word's passed to Barbara; and 'tis all for his good. [*Aloud*]. As long as you live? Alas! that reminds me of your little affair. I'm to be your second, you know.

Soft. Second!—affair!

Wil. With that fierce Colonel Flint. I warned you against him; but you have such a deuce of a spirit. Don't you remember?

Soft. No; why, what was it all about?

Wil. Let me see—oh, Flint said something insolent about Mistress Barbara.

Soft. He did?—Ruffian!

Wil. So—you called him out! But if you'll empower me in your name to retract and apologize—

Soft. Not a bit of it. Insolent to Barbara! *Dimidium meæ*. I'd fight him if he were the first swordsman in England.

Wil. Why, that's just what he is!

Soft. Don't care; I'm his man—though a dead one.

Wil. [*Aside.* Hang it—he's as brave as myself, on that side of his character. I must turn to another.] No, Softhead, that was not the cause of the quarrel—said it to rouse you, as you seemed rather low. The fact is that it was a jest on yourself, that you took up rather warmly.

Soft. Was that all—only myself?

Wil. No larger subject; and Flint is *such* a good fencer!

Soft. My dear Fred; I retract, I apologize; I despise duelling—absurd and unchristianlike.

Wil. Leave all to me. Dismiss the subject. I'll settle it; only, Softhead, you see our set has very stiff rules on such matters. And if you apologize to a bravo like Flint; nay, if you don't actually, cheerfully, rapturously fight him—though sure to be killed—I fear you must resign all ideas of high life!

Soft. *Dimidium meæ*, but low life is better than no life at all!

Wil. There's no denying that proposition. It will console you to think that Mr. Easy's kind side is Cheap-side. And you may get upon one, if you return to the other.

Soft. I was thinking so, when you found me—*thinking* [*hesitatingly*].—But to leave you—

Wil. Oh, not yet! Retire at least with *éclat*. Share with me one grand, crowning, last, daring, and desperate adventure.

Soft. Deadman's Lane again, I suppose? I thank you for nothing. Fred, I have long been your faithful follower. [*With emotion.*] Now, my Lord, I'm your humble servant.*
[Aside. Barbara will comfort me. She's perhaps at Sir Geoffrey's.] [*Exit.*]

Wil. Well! his love will repay him, and the City of London will present me with her freedom, in a gold box for restoring her prodigal son to her Metropolitan bosom. Deadman's Lane—that was an adventure, indeed. Lucy's

* A play upon words plagiarised from Farquhar. The reader must regret that the author had not the courage to plagiarise more from Farquhar.

mother still living—implores me to get her the sight of her child. Will Lucy believe me? Will——

Enter SMART.

—Ha, Smart? Well — Well? — You — baffled Sir Geoffrey?

Smart. He was out.

Wil. And you gave the young lady my letter?

Smart. Hist! my Lord, it so affected her—that—here she comes. *[Exit SMART.]*

Enter LUCY.

Lucy. Oh, my Lord, is this true? Can it be? A mother lives! Do you wonder that I forget all else?—that I am here—and with but one prayer, lead me to that mother! She says, too, she has been slandered—blesses me—that my heart defended her,—but—but—this is no snare—you do not deceive me?

Wil. Deceive you! Oh, Lucy—I have a sister myself at the hearth of my father.

Lucy. Forgive me—lead on—quick, quick—oh, mother, mother! *[Exeunt LUCY and WILMOT.]*

ACT V.—SCENE I.

Old Mill near the Thames.

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. The Despatch to the Pretender [*opening it*]. Ho! Wilmot is in my power; here ends his rivalry. The Duke's life, too, in exchange for the Memoir? No! Fear is not his weak point; but how can this haughtiest of men ever yield such memorials? Even admit the base lie of his brother? Still her story has that which may touch him. Since I have seen her, I feel sure of her innocence. The Duke comes; now all depends on my chance to hit the right side of a character.

Enter DUKE OF MIDDLESEX.

Duke. Lord Loftus not here yet! Strange!

Hard. My Lord Duke—forgive this intrusion!

Duke. T'other man I met at Lord Wilmot's. Sir, your servant; I'm somewhat in haste.

Hard. Still I presume to delay your Grace; for it is on a question of honour!

Duke. Honour! that goes before all! Sir, my time is your own.

Hard. Your Grace is the head of a house, whose fame is a part of our history; it is therefore that I speak to you boldly, since it may be that wrongs were inflicted by one of its members—

Duke. How, sir!

Hard. Assured that if so (and should it be still in your power), your Grace will frankly repair them, as a duty you took with the ermine and coronet.

Duke. You speak well, sir.—[*Aside.* Very much like a gentleman!]

Hard. Your Grace had a brother, Lord Henry de Mowbray.

Duke. Ah! Sir, to the point.

Hard. At once, my Lord Duke. Many years ago a duel

took place between Lord Henry and Sir Geoffrey Morland—your Grace knows the cause.

Duke. Hem! yes; a lady—who—who——

Hard. Was banished her husband's home, and her infant's cradle, on account of suspicions based, my Lord Duke, on—what your Grace cannot wonder that the husband believed—the word of a Mowbray!

Duke. [*Aside.* Villain!] But what became of the husband, never since heard of? He——

Hard. Fled abroad from men's tongues, and dishonour. He did not return to his native land, till he had changed for another the name that a Mowbray had blighted. Unhappy man! he lives still.

Duke. And the lady—the lady——

Hard. Before the duel, had gone to the house of her father, who was forced that very day to fly the country. His life was in danger.

Duke. How?

Hard. He was loyal to the Stuarts,—and—a Plot was discovered.

Duke. Brave, noble gentleman! Go on, sir.

Hard. Her other ties wrenched from her, his daughter went with him into exile—his stay, his hope, his all. His lands were confiscated. She was high-born: she worked for a father's bread. Conceive yourself, my Lord Duke, in the place of that father—loyal and penniless; noble; proscribed; dependent on the toils of a daughter; and that daughter's name sullied by——

Duke. A word?——

Hard. From the son of that house to which all the chivalry of England looked for example.

Duke. [*Aside.* Oh, Heaven; can my glory thus be turned to my shame?] But they said she had died, sir.

Hard. When her father had gone to the grave, she herself spread or sanctioned that rumour—for she resolved to die to the world. She entered a convent, prepared to take the noviciate—when she suddenly learned that a person had been inquiring for her at Paris, who stated that Lord Henry de Mowbray had left behind him a Memoir——

Duke. Ah!

Hard. Which acquits her. She learned, too, the clue

to her husband—resolved to come hither—arrived six days since. No proof of her innocence save those for which I now appeal to your Grace !

Duke. O pride, be my succour ! [*Haughtily.*] Appeal to me, sir, and wherefore ?

Hard. The sole evidence alleged against this lady are the fact of a letter sent from herself to Lord Henry, and the boast of a man now no more. She asserts that that letter would establish her innocence. She believes that, on his deathbed, your brother retracted his boast : and that the Memoir he left will attest to its falsehood.

Duke. Asserts—believes—go on—go on.

Hard. No, my Lord Duke, I have done. I know that that letter, that Memoir exist ; that they are now in your hands. If her assertion be false—if they prove not her innocence—a word, nay, a sign, from the chief of a house so renowned for its honour, suffices. I take my leave, and condemn her. But if her story be true, you have heard the last chance of a wife and a mother to be restored to the husband she loves and forgives, to the child who has grown into womanhood remote from her care ; and these blessings I pledged her my faith to obtain, if that letter, that Memoir, should prove that the boast was——

Duke. A lie, sir, a lie, a black lie !—the coward's worst crime—a lie on the fair name of a woman ! Sir, this heat, perhaps, is unseemly ; thus to brand my own brother ! But if we, the peers of England, and the representatives of her gentlemen, can hear, can think, of vile things done, whoever the doer, with calm pulse and cold heart—perish our titles ; where would be the use of a Duke ?

Hard [*Aside*]. A very bright side of his character.

Duke. Sir, you are right. The Memoir you speak of is in my hands ; and with it, Lady Morland's own letter. Much in that Memoir relates to myself ; and so galls all the pride I am said to possess, that not ten minutes since methought I had rather my duchy were forfeit than have exposed its contents to the pity or laugh of a stranger. I think no more of myself. A woman has appealed for her name to mine honour as a man. Now, sir, your commands ?

Hard. No passage is needed, save that which acquits Lady Morland. Let the Memoir still rest in your hands.

Condescend but to bring it forthwith to my house; and may I hope that my Lord Loftus may accompany you—there is an affair of moment on which I would speak to you both.

Duke. Your address, sir; I will but return home for the documents, and proceed at once to your house. Hurry not; I will wait. Allow me to take your hand, sir. You know how to speak to the heart of a gentleman.

[*Exit.*]

Hard. [*Aside*]. Yet how ignorant we are of men's hearts till we see them lit up by a passion! This noble has made what is honour so clear to my eyes. Let me pause—let me think—let me choose! I feel as if I stood at the crisis of life.

Enter SOTHEAD.

Soft. What have I seen!—Where go?—Whom consult? Oh, Mr. Hardman! You're a friend of Lord Wilmot's, of Sir Geoffrey's, of Lucy's?

Hard. Speak—quick—to the purpose.

Soft. On my way to Sir Geoffrey's, I passed by a house of the most villanous character. I dare not say how Wilmot himself has described it. [*Earnestly.*] Oh, sir, you know Wilmot! you know his sentiments on marriage. I saw Wilmot and Lucy Thornside enter that infamous house!—Deadman's Lane!

Hard. [*Aside*]. Deadman's Lane? He takes her to the arms of her mother! forestalls my own plan, will reap my reward. Have I schemed, then, for him! No, by yon heavens!

Soft. I ran on to Sir Geoffrey's—he was out.

Hard. [*who has been writing in his tablets, tears out a page*]. Take this to Justice Kite's, hard by: he will send two special officers, placed at the door, Deadman's Lane, to wait my instructions. They must go instantly—arrive as soon as myself. Then hasten to Mr. Easy's; Sir Geoffrey is there. Break your news with precaution, and bring him straight to that house. Leave the rest to my care. Away with you; quick.

Soft. I know he will kill me! But I'm right. And when I'm right,—*Dimidium meæ!*

[*Exit.*]

Hard. Ho! ho! It is war! My choice is made. I am armed at all points, and strike for the victory.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Apartment in the house, Deadman's Lane, Crown and Portcullis, very old-fashioned and sombre, faded tapestry on the walls, high mantel-piece, with deep angles ; furniture rude and simple ; general air of the room not mean, but forlorn, as of that in some house neglected and little inhabited since the days of Elizabeth ; the tapestry, drawn aside at the back, shows a door into an inner room—LUCY and her mother,—WILMOT seated.

Lady Thorn. And you believe me. Dear child—this indeed is happiness.—Ah ! if your cruel father—

Lucy. Hush—he will believe you, too.

Lady Thorn. No ; I could not venture into his presence, without the proof that he had wronged me.

Wil. Oh, that I had known before what interest you had in this Memoir!—how can I recover it from the Duke!—

Lucy. You will—you must—dear—dear Lord Wilmot—you have restored me to my mother ; restore my mother to her home.

Wil. Ah—and this hand—would you withdraw it then ?

Lucy. Never from him who reunites my parents.

Lady Thorn. Ha!—a voice without—steps !

Wil. If it should be Sir Geoffrey—in some rash violence he might—retire—quick—quick.

[*Exeunt* LADY THORNSIDE and LUCY in the inner room.]

Enter HARDMAN.

Hard. Alone ! Where is Lucy, my lord ?

Wil. In the next room with——

Hard. Her mother ?

Wil. What ! you know ?

Hard. I know that between us two there is a strife, and I am come to decide it ; you love Lucy Thornsides.

Wil. Well ! I told you so.

Hard. You told it, my Lord, to a rival. Ay, smile. You have wealth, rank, fashion, and wit ; I have none of these, and I need them not. But I say to you—that ere the hand on this dial moves to that near point in time, your love will be hopeless and your suit be withdrawn.

Wil. The man's mad. Unless, sir, you wish me to believe

that my life hangs on your sword, I cannot quite comprehend why my love should go by your watch.

Hard. I command you, Lord Wilmot, to change this tone of levity: I command it in the name of a life which, I think, you prize more than your own; a life that is now in my hands. You told me to sound your father. I have not done so—I have detected——

Wil. Detected! Hold, sir! that word implies crime.

Hard. Ay, the crime of the great. History calls it ZEAL. Law styles it HIGH TREASON.

Wil. What do I hear? Heavens!—my father! Sir, your word is no proof?

Hard. But *this* is! [*Producing the Requisition to the Pretender.*] 'Tis high treason, conspiring to levy arms against the King on the throne—here called the Usurper. High treason to promise to greet with banner and trump a pretender—here called James the Third. Such is the purport of the paper I hold—and here is the name of your father.

Wil. [*Aside*]. Both are armed and alone.

[*Locks the outer door by which he is standing.*

Hard. [*Aside*]. So, I guess his intention. [*Opens the window and looks out.*] Good, the officers are come.

Wil. What the law calls high treason I know not; what the honest call treason I know. Traitor, thou who hast used the confidence of a son against the life of a father, thou shalt not quit these walls with that life in thy grasp—yield the proof thou hast plundered or forged.

[*Seizes him.*

Hard. 'St! the officers of justice are below; loose thine hold, or the life thou demandest falls from these hands into theirs!

Wil. [*recoiling*]. Foiled! Foiled! How act! what do? And thy son set yon bloodhound on thy track, O my father! Sir, you say you are my rival; I guess the terms you now come to impose!

Hard. I impose no terms. What needs the demand? Have you an option? I think better of you. We both love the same woman; I have loved her a year, you a week; you have her father's dislike, I his consent. One must yield—why should I? Rude son of the people though I be, why must I be thrust from the sunshine

because you cross my path as the fair and the high-born ? What have I owed to your order or you ?

Wil. To me, sir ? Well, if to me you owed some slight favour, I should scorn at this moment to speak it.

Hard. I owe favour, the slightest to no man ; 'tis my boast. Listen still, I schemed to save your father, not to injure. Had you rather this scroll had fallen into the hands of a spy ? And now, if I place it in yours—save your name from attainder, your fortunes from confiscation, your father from the axe of the headsman—why should I ask terms ? Would it be possible for you to say, “ Sir, I thank you ; and in return I would do my best to rob your life of the woman you love, and whom I have just known a week ? ” Could you, peer's son, and gentleman, thus reply,—when, if I know aught of this grand people of England, not a mechanic who walks thro' yon streets, from the loom to the hovel, but what would cry “ Shame ! ” on such answer ?

Wil. Sir, I cannot argue with, I cannot rival the man who has my father's life at his will, whether to offer it as a barter, or to yield it as a boon. Either way, rivalry between us is henceforth impossible. Fear mine no more ! Give me the scroll—I depart.

Hard. [*Aside.* His manliness moves me !] Nay let me pray your permission to give it myself to your father, and with such words as will save him, and others whose names are hereto attached, from such perilous hazards in future.

Wil. In this too I fear that you leave me no choice ; I must trust as I may to your honour ! but heed well if—

Hard. Menace not ; you doubt, then, my honour ?

Wil. [*with suppressed passion*]. Plainly, I do ; our characters differ. I had held myself dishonoured for ever if our positions had been reversed,—if I had taken such confidence as was placed in you,—concealed the rivalry,—prepared the scheme,—timed the moment,—forced the condition in the guise of benefit. No, sir, no ; that may be talent, it is not honour.

Hard. [*Aside.* This stings ! scornful fool that he is, not to see that I was half relenting. And now I feel but the foe ! How sting again ? I will summon him back to wit-

ness himself my triumph.] Stay, my Lord! [*Writing at the table.*] You doubt that I should yield up the document to your father? Bring him hither at once! He is now at my house with the Duke of Middlesex; pray them both to come here, and give this note to the Duke. [*With a smile.*] You will do it, my Lord.

Wil. Ay, indeed,—and when my father is safe, I will try to think that I wronged you. [*Aside.* And not one parting word to—to—S'death—I am unmanned. Show such emotion to him—No, no!—And if I cannot watch over that gentle life, why the angels will!] I—I go, sir,—fulfil the compact; I have paid the price. [*Exit.*]

Hard. He loves her more than I thought for. But she? Does she love him? [*Goes to the door.*] Mistress Lucy! [*Leads forth LUCY.*]

Lucy. Lord Wilmot gone!

Hard. Nay, speak not of him. If ever he hoped that your father could have overcome a repugnance to his suit, he is now compelled to resign that hope, and for ever [*LUCY turns aside, and weeps quietly.*] Let us speak of your parents—your mother——

Lucy. Oh, yes—my dear mother—I so love her already.

Hard. You have heard her tale! Would you restore her, no blot on her name, to the hearth of your father?

Lucy. Speak!—speak!—can it be so?

Hard. If it cost you some sacrifice?

Lucy. Life has none for an object thus holy.

Hard. Hear, and decide. It is the wish of your father that I should ask for this hand——

Lucy. No!—no!

Hard. Is the sacrifice so hard? Wait and hear the atonement. You come from the stolen embrace of a mother; I will make that mother the pride of your home. You have yearned for the love of a father; I will break down the wall between yourself and his heart—I will dispel all the clouds that have darkened his life.

Lucy. You will—you will! O blessings upon you!

Hard. Those blessings this hand can confer!

Lucy. But—but—the heart—the heart—that does not go with the hand.

Hard. Later, it will. I only pray for a trial. I ask but to conquer that heart, not to break it. Your father will

soon be here—every moment I expect him. He comes in the full force of suspicion—deeming you lured here by Wilmot—fearing (pardon the vile word) your dishonour. How explain? You cannot speak of your mother till I first prove her guiltless. Could they meet till I do, words would pass that would make even union hereafter too bitter to her pride as a woman. Give me the power at once to destroy suspicion, remove fear, delay other explanations. Let me speak—let me act as your betrothed, your accepted. Hark! voices below—your father comes!—I have no time to plead; excuse what is harsh—seems ungenerous—

Sir Geof. [*without*]. Out of my way!—loose my sword!

Lucy. Oh save my mother!—Let him not see my mother.

Hard. Grant me this trial—pledge this hand now—retract hereafter if you will. Your mother's name—your parents' reunion! Ay or no!—will you pledge it?

Lucy. Can you doubt their child's answer? I pledge it!

Enter SIR GEOFFREY, struggling from EASY, SOTHEAD, BARBARA.

Sir Geof. Where is he? where is this villain? let me get at him! What, what, gone? [*Falling on HARDMAN's breast.*] Oh Hardman! You came, you came! I dare not look at her yet. *Is she saved?*

Hard. Your daughter is innocent in thought as in deed—I speak in the name of the rights she has given me; you permitted me to ask for her hand; and here she has pledged it!

Sir Geof. O my child! my child! I never called you that name before. Did I? Hush! I know now that thou art my child; know it by my anguish; know it by my joy. Who could wring from me tears like these, but a child!

Easy. But how is it all, Mr. Hardman? you know everything! That fool Sothead, with his cock-and-bull story, frightened us out of our wits.

Soft. That's the thanks I get! How is it all, Mr. Hardman?

Sir Geof. Ugh, what so clear? He came here—he saved

her! My child was grateful. Approach, Hardman, near, near. Forgive me, if your childhood was lonely; forgive me, if you seemed so unfriended. Your father made me promise that you should not know the temptations that he thought had corrupted himself,—should not know of my favours, to be galled by what he called my suspicions,—should not feel the yoke of dependence;—should believe that you forced your own way through the world—till it was made. Now it is so. Ah, not in vain did I pardon him his wrongs against me; not in vain fulfil that sad promise which gave a smile to his lips in dying; not in vain have I bestowed benefits on you. You have saved—I know it—I feel it; saved from infamy—my child.

Lucy. Hush, sir, hush!

[*Throws herself into BARBARA'S arms.*]

Hard. My father? Benefits? You smile, Mr. Easy. What means he? No man on this earth ever bestowed benefits on me!

Easy. Ha! ha! ha! Nay, excuse me; but when I think that that's said by a clever fellow like you—ha!—ha!—the jest is too good; as if any one ever drove a coach through this world but what some other one built the carriage, or harnessed the horses! Why, who gave you the education that helped to make you what you are? Who slyly paid Tonson, the publisher, to bring out the work that first raised you into notice? Who sent you the broker with the tale of the South-Sea Scheme? From whose purse came the sum that bought your annuity? Whose land does the annuity burthen? Who told Fleece'em, the boroughmonger, to offer you a seat in Parliament? Who paid for the election that did not cost you a shilling?—who, but my suspicious, ill-tempered, good-hearted friend there? And you are the son of his foster-brother, the man who first wronged and betrayed him!

Soft. And this is the gentleman who knows everybody and everything? Did not even know his own father! La! why he's been quite a take-in! Ha! ha!

Easy. Ha! ha! ha!

Hard. And all the while I thought I was standing apart from others,—needing none; served by none; mastering men; moulding them,—the men whom my father had wronged went before me with noiseless beneficence, and

opened my path through the mountain I fancied this right hand had hewn !

Sir Geof. Tut ! I did but level the ground ; till you were strong eno' to rise of yourself ; I did not give you the post that you named with so manly a pride ; I did not raise you to the councils of your country as the " Equal of All ! "

Soft. No ! for that you'll thank Fred. He bribed the Prime Minister with his favourite Murillo. He said you wanted the post to win the lady you loved. *Dimidium mei*, — I think you might have told him what lady it was.

Hard. So ! Wilmot ! — It needed but this !

Easy. Pooh, Mr. Softhead ! Sir Geoffrey would never consent to a lord. Quite right. Practical, steady fellow is Mr. Hardman ; and as to his father, a disreputable connection — quite right not to know him ! All you want, Geoffrey, is to secure Lucy's happiness.

Sir Geof. All ! That, now, is his charge.

Hard. I accept it. But first I secure yours, O my benefactor ! This house, in which you feared to meet infamy, is the home of sorrow and virtue ; the home of a woman unsullied, but slandered, — of her who, loving you still, followed your footsteps ; watched you night and day from yon windows ; sent you those flowers, the tokens of innocence and youth ; in romance, it is true — the romance only known to a woman — the romance only known to the pure ! Lord Wilmot is guiltless ! He led your child to the arms of a mother !

Sir Geof. Silence him ! — silence him ! — 'tis a snare ! I retract ! He shall not have this girl ! *Her* house ? Do I breathe the same air as the woman so loved and so faithless ?

Lucy. Pity, for my mother ! — No, no ; justice for her ! Pity for yourself and for me !

Sir Geof. Come away, or you shall not be my child, I'll disown you. That man speaks —

Enter WILMOT, DUKE, and LORD LOFTUS.

Hard. I speak, and I prove — [*To the DUKE*] — The Memoirs — [*Glancing over them.*] Here is the very letter that the menial informed you your wife sent to Lord Henry. Read it ; and judge if such scorn would not good

such a man to revenge. What revenge could he wield? Why, a boast!

Sir Geof. [reading]. The date of the very day that he boasted. Ha! brave words! proud heart! I suspect!—I suspect!

Hard. Lord Henry's confession! It was writ on his deathbed.

Lord Lof. 'Tis his hand. I attest it.

Duke. I, too, John, Duke of Middlesex.

Sir Geof. [who has been reading the confession]. Heaven forgive me! Can *she*? The flowers; the figures; the—How blind I've been! Where is she? where is she? You said she was here! [*LADY THORNSIDE appears at the door.*] Ellinor! Ellinor! to my arms—to my heart—O my wife! Pardon! Pardon!

Lady Thorn. Nay, all was forgiven when I once more embraced our child.

Hard. [to LOFTUS and DUKE]. My Lords, destroy this Requisition! When you signed it, you doubtless believed that the Prince you would serve was of the Church of your Protestant fathers? You are safe evermore; for your honour is freed. The Prince has retired to Rome, and abjured your faith. I will convince you of this later.

[DUKE and SOTHEAD continue to shun each other with mutual apprehension.]

Easy [to WILMOT]. Glad to find you are not so bad as you seemed, my Lord; and now that Lucy is engaged to Mr. Hardman—

Wil. Engaged already! [*Aside.* So! he asked me here to-insult me with his triumph!] Well!

Hard. Lucy, your parents are united—my promise fulfilled; permit me—[*Takes her hand.*] Sir Geoffrey, the son of him who so wronged you, and whose wrongs you pardoned, now reminds you, that he is entrusted with the charge to ensure the happiness of your child! Behold the man of her choice, and take from his presence your own cure of distrust. With his faults on the surface, and with no fault that is worse than that of concealing his virtues;—Here she loves and is loved! And thus I discharge the trust, and ensure the happiness!

[*Placing her hand in WILMOT'S.*

Sir Geof. How ?

Lady Thorn. It is true—do you not read in her blush the secret of her heart ?

Wil. How can I accept at the price of—

Hard. Hush ! For the third time to-day, you have but one option. You cannot affect to be generous to me at the cost of a heart all your own. Take your right. Come, my Lord, lest I tell all the world how you bribed the Prime Minister.

Soft. [*who has taken EASY aside*]. But, indeed, Mr. Easy, I reform ; I repent. Mr. Hardman will have a bride in the country—let me have a bride in the city. After all, I was not such a very bad monster.

Easy. Pooh ! Won't hear of it ! Want to marry only just to mimic my Lord.

Bar. Dear Lord Wilmot ; do say a good word for us.

Easy. No, sir ; no ! Your head's been turned by a lord.

Wil. Not the first man whose head has been turned by a lord, with the help of the Duke of Burgundy—eh, Mr. Easy ? I'll just appeal to Sir Geoffrey.

Easy. No—no—hold your tongue, my Lord.

Wil. And you insisted upon giving your daughter to Mr. Softhead ; forced her upon him.

Easy. I—never !—When ?

Wil. Last night, when you were chaired member for the City of London. I'll just explain the case to Sir Geoffrey—

Easy. Confound it—hold—hold !—You like this young reprobate, Barbara ?

Bar. Dear papa, his health is so delicate ! I should like to take care of him.

Easy. There, go, and take care of each other. Ha ! ha ! I suppose it is all for the best.

[DUKE takes forth, and puts on, his spectacles ; examines SOFTHEAD curiously—is convinced that he is human, approaches, and offers his hand, which SOFTHEAD, emboldened by BARBARA, though not without misgivings, accepts.]

A great deal of dry stuff, called philosophy, is written about life. But the grand thing is to take it coolly, and have a good-humoured indulgence—

SCENE II.] OR, MANY SIDES TO A CHARACTER. 309

Wil. For the force of example, Mr. Easy!

Soft. Ha! ha! ha!

Wil. For the follies of fashion, and the crimes of monsters like myself, and that terrible Softhead!

Sir Geof. Ha! ha!

Hard. You see, my dear Wilmot, many sides to a character!

Wil. Plague on it, yes! But get at them all, and we're not so bad as we seem——

Soft. No, Fred, not quite so bad!

Wil. Taking us as we stand—ALTOGETHER!



“DAVID FALLEN IS DEAD!”

OR,

A KEY TO THE PLAY.

(AN AFTER-SCENE, BY WAY OF AN EPILOGUE.)

(*Intended to have been spoken by the Original Amateur Performers.*)

SCENE.

WILMOT'S Apartment.—WILMOT, SIR GEOFFREY, SOPHHEAD, EASY, and
HARDMAN, seated at a Table. *Wine, Fruits, &c.*

Wil. Pass the wine—what's the news?

Easy. Funds have risen to-day.

Sir Geof. I suspect it will rain.

Easy. Well, I've got in my hay.

Hard. DAVID FALLEN IS DEAD!

Onnes. DAVID FALLEN!

Wil. Poor fellow!

Sir Geof. I should like to have seen him!

Soft. I saw him! So yellow!

Hard. Your annuity killed him!

Wil. How—how? to the point.

Hard. By the shock on his nerves—at the sight of a joint.

A very great genius—

Easy. I own—now he's dead,

That a writer more charming—

Wil. Was never worse fed!

Hard. His country was grateful—

Soft. [*surprised*]. He looked very shabby!

Hard. His bones—

Soft. You might count them!—

Hard. Repose in the Abbey!

Soft. [after a stare of astonishment]. So THAT is the way
that a country is grateful!

Ere his nerves grew so weak,—if she'd sent him a plateful.

Easy [hastily producing a long paper]. MY TAXES!
Your notions are perfectly hateful!

[Pause.—Evident feeling that there's no getting
over MR. EASY's paper.

Wil. Pope's epigram stung him.

Hard. Yes, Pope has a sting.

Wil. But who writes the epitaph?

Hard. Pope: a sweet thing!

Wil. 'Gad, if I were an author, I'd rather, instead,

Have the epitaph living—the epigram dead.

If Pope had but just considered that matter,

Poor David——

Soft. Had gone to the Abbey much fatter:

Easy. He was rather a scamp!

Wil. Put yourself in his place.

Easy [horror-struck]. Heaven forbid!

Hard. Let us deem him the Last of a Race!

Sir Geof. But the race that succeeds may have little
more pelf.

Hard. Ay; and trials as sharp. I'm an author myself.

But the remedy? Wherefore should authors not build——

Easy. An alms-house?

Hard. No, merchant, their own noble Guild!

Some fortress for youth in the battle for fame;

Some shelter that Age is not humbled to claim;

Some roof from the storm for the Pilgrim of Knowledge;—

Wil. Not unlike what our ancestors meant by—a
College;

Where teacher and student alike the subscriber,

Untaxing the Patron,—

Easy. The State——

Hard. Or the briber,——

Wil. The son of proud Learning shall knock at the door

And cry *This** is rich, and not whine *That*† is poor.

Hard. Oh right! For these men govern earth from
their graves—

Shall the dead be as kings, and the living as slaves!

* The head.

† The pocket.

Easy. It is all their own fault—they so slave one another;
Not a son of proud Learning but knocks—down his brother!

Wil. Yes! other vocations, from Thames to the Border,
Have some *esprit de corps*, and some pride in their order;
Lawyers, soldiers, and doctors, if quarrels do pass,
Still soften their spite from respect to their class;
Why should authors be spitting and scratching like tabbies,
To leave but dry bones——

Soft. For those grateful cold Abbeys!

Hard. Worst side of their character!

Wil. True to the letter.
Are their sides, then, so fat, we can't hit on a better?

Hard. Why—the sticks in the fable!—our Guild be the tether.

Wil. Ay: the thorns are rubbed off when the sticks cling together.

Soft. [*musingly*]. I could be—yes—I could be a Pilgrim of Knowledge,
If you'd change Deadman's Lane to a snug little College.

Sir Geof. Ugh! stuff!—it takes money a College to found.

Easy. I will head the subscription myself—with a pound.

Hard. Quite enough from a friend: for we authors should feel

We must put our own shoulders like men to the wheel.
Be thrifty when thriving—take heed of the morrow,—

Easy. And not get in debt——

Sir Geof. Where the deuce could they borrow?

Hard. Let us think of a scheme.

Easy. He is always so knowing.

Wil. A scheme! I have got one; the wheel's set & going!

A play from one author.

Hard. With authors for actors.—

Wil. And some benefit nights,—

Both. For the world's benefactors.

Sir Geof. Who'll give you the play? it will not be worth giving,

Authors now are so bad; always are while they're living!

Easy. Ah! if David Fallen, great genius, were here——

Omnes. Great genius!

Hard. A man whom all time shall revere !

Soft. [*impatiently*]. But he's dead.

Omnes [*lugubriously*]. He is dead !

Easy. The true Classical School, sir !

Ah! could he come back !

Wil. He'll not be such a fool, sir.

[*Taking HARDMAN aside, whispers.*

We know of an author.

Hard. [*doubtfully*]. Ye—s—s, David was brighter.

Omnes. But he's dead.

Hard. This might do—as a live sort of writer.

Easy. Alive! that looks bad.

Soft. Must we take a live man ?

Wil. To oblige us he'll be, sir,—as dead as he can !

Soft. Alive; and *will* write, sir ?

Hard. With pleasure, sir.

Soft. PLEASURE !

Hard. With less than your wit, he has more than your leisure.

Coquets with the Muse——

Sir Geof. Lucky dog to afford her !

Wil. Can we get his good side ?

Hard. Yes, he's proud of his order.

Wil. Then he'll do !

Sir Geof. As for wit—he has books on his shelves.

Hard. Now the actors ?

Wil. By Jove, we will act it ourselves.

[*Omnes, at first surprised into enthusiasm, succeeded by great consternation.*

Sir Geof. Ugh, not I !

Soft. Lord ha' mercy !

Easy. A plain, sober, steady——

Wil. I'll appeal to Sir Geoffrey. There's one caught already !

This suspicious old knight; to his blind side, direct us.

Hard. Your part is to act——

Wil. True; and his to suspect us.

I rely upon you.

Hard [*looking at his watch*]. Me ! I have not a minute !

Wil. If the Play has a plot, he is sure to be in it.

Come, Softhead !

Soft. I won't. I'll go home to my mother.

Wil. Pooh! monsters like us always help one another.

Sir Geof. I suspect you will act.

Soft. Well, I've this consolation—
Still to imitate one——

Hard. Who defies imitation.

Wil. Let the public but favour the plan we have hit on,
And we'll chair through all London,—our Family Briton.

Sir Geof. What?—what? Look at Easy! He's drunk, or
I dream——

Easy [*rising*]. The toast of the evening—SUCCESS TO THE
SCHEME!

END OF VOL. I.

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